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[A LOVELY MODEL.]

## FATE OR FOLLY; OR, AN ILL-OMENED MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Lady Violet's Victims," "Lord Jasper's Secret," etc., etc.*

### CHAPTER VI.

#### THE FATE OF THE PREY.

White as the spotless snow her flowing robe,  
The lilies gleamed amid her sun-kissed hair,  
And at her feet in sweet submission bowed  
Starry anemones and snowdrops fair.

LILIAN could remember nothing clearly of what had happened till she woke to consciousness one morning on board the deck of a steamer. She had a hazy notion of having been taken into a dark room, while strange faces bent over her, and someone offered her food which she had no strength to swallow.

All was a dream to the child till this morning on the steamer, when she saw the green foaming waves breaking against the vessel's side, and then she burst into tears. Where was she? Alone or with her dear papa. Should she ever see him and Alice again, ever roam about the gardens of her home and chase the butterflies in the sunlit loveliness of a July morning?

"You must not cry, little one," a voice whispered in her ear, and the Indian glided to her side.

All the passengers were below dining in the cabin. They were many hundred miles away from England. Only herself, a little Indian boy, and this man were near. He had carried her on deck, wrapt a shawl round her, and explained to inquirers that she was his daughter, who was dangerously ill and much disposed to sleep.

But Lillian, from weeping, now began to scream—screams that were inaudible to passengers and crew through the noise of the sea and the engines of the vessel. Memory was returning. She recollected having played on the lawn and picking flowers, and then this man came and took her away.

He thought it better to reason with her at first, and took her on his knee. If all reasoning failed, then would he terrify her into calmness. He did not wish to harm the child, but he meant to make her into a slave, and if she were tiresome, punish her into being good again.

"Leave off screaming," he said, quietly; "that will be no use. You ought to be pleased to have left your cruel step-mother" (Lillian had told him of Zama's unkindness to her in the gardens); "she would have killed you had you stopped with her."

Lillian's large eyes were upturned to his, and she trembled and was still.

"Do you want to die, little one?" he asked, gently.

"No," said Lillian, shaking her lovely head. "That would mean to lie quiet like grandma and have flowers put in your hand and not be

able to smell or feel them; but I want to go home to my papa. He kissed Lillian, so did Alice. Take me to him again."

"If you speak of any of them you will not be able to live!" he said, watching the effect of his words on Lillian.

"Why?"

"I cannot tell you why, but it is the will of Fate."

"I never heard that word."

"Call me Fate," he said, laughing low under his breath, while Lillian trembled in his arms, and then he carried her to the edge of the vessel and bade her look well at the angry sea beneath. "If ever you speak of your papa, or of Alice, or anything about your home, Fate will drop you in over there," he said, while the foam of the lace-like waves dashed over her face.

"You are a wicked Fate," the child muttered, clinging to him, too terrified to scream, and resolving to obey him.

She felt like a little tame bird which has dropped by accident into a snake's cage, and is petrified by its gaze.

"You belong to me as if you were my little dog or cat," he said, again sitting down on deck, and placing Lillian by his side. "Fate can do anything. He bought you like he'd buy an apple, so you must do all I tell you, and never disobey me. If you do you will die like your grandma."

Lillian's small mind began to understand at last—she was never to speak of her papa, or of Alice, or her home; this man was her owner and she feared him already, so that she would obey a look or gesture. Every ignorant, childish mind understands how terrible it is to be in one per-

son's power—to belong to a being they dread and have no influence over. Lillian had been a spoilt, pleasure-loving, dainty little thing, daring, careless, and defiant, but she would learn to crouch and tremble like any small, weak, unreasoning animal, dreading its master's wrath.

"I shall have no trouble with her," he thought, "she's broken in already."

He did not wish to be cruel to Lillian, he only desired that she should fear him, as being better for his safety.

"When we buy anything we call it by a new name," he said, softly touching her hair; the dark eyelashes fringed her cheek on which tears still lingered.

Lillian was so altered that all recognition was impossible—he had dyed her hair and stained her face so that she looked to all intents and purposes his own child.

"I shall call you Aida."

Lillian repeated the name slowly after him and made no reply—she felt thankful that Fate allowed her to live.

"Does Aida quite understand what she is to do?"

"Yes," said the child, timidly.

She did not rehearse his lesson, she feared him as she feared the great ocean that had the power to drown her and take her to where her grandma had gone. He had no further trouble with Lillian—she ate her meals in almost silence, cried herself to sleep for many nights, and then by degrees, such is the marvellous elasticity of youth, grew accustomed to the change, almost forgot the past, and even enjoyed herself in the present.

He took her to Italy, and Lillian's small feet traversed moss-grown paths and classic groves; she loved the solitude of the forests, the splendour of the mountains, the sound of the wind amid the pine-groves. She was reared among olive and ilex fields, among fir-woods and beech trees; she watched the patient mules at their everlasting toil along the white roads, she heard the women singing at the wells, but no father's love was ever hers again, the warmth of no father's kisses ever rejoiced her young heart. She was an orphan and a stranger at the mercy and caprice of the fate that had conquered. So they wandered from city to city, and at last they came to Rome.

The Indian's health had of late somewhat failed him. Some fatal malaria or fever peculiar to the ill-drained towns reduced him to extreme weakness, and Lillian would find him watching her strangely from time to time with a curious expression in his blood-shot eyes.

Gratitude and ingratitude are mere terms to Ainties. He loved the girl in a way, he liked to meet her wistful, frightened gaze, to be waited on by her, but he was grateful for nothing. She was his slave and companion. Had he been caught red-handed in iniquity, and steeped as he was in crime, he knew the English law would have made short work of him, and hanged him high up on a scaffold as Haman hung Mordecai. He had cheated the law, he had won, he could cry quits at last with his enemy—Sir Richard Allington.

Lillian was now about fifteen years of age, and superbly beautiful. There was no misery or degradation in her life, but it was poor and humble. As time passed on he believed there was little to fear of discovery, so he no longer dyed her face or hair, it hung in rich clusters over her shoulders, and her figure, as yet unformed, was a miracle of voluptuous grace.

She was a picture in herself, full of romance and poetry, with the lovely limbs of a Dryad of the woods; sad at times, and longing for more affection, but tender, dutiful, and patient.

"Now that we are in Rome, Aida, you can earn some money," the Indian had said to her one day when he was weaker than usual; "you can sit to the great artists and sculptors here for gold as a model."

And Lillian arose and went out as he bade her without a murmur across the streets of the Eternal City, while poets as they passed, seeing her young loveliness, longed to make her their muse. Many men would fain have wooed her, and

lovers' tongues have whispered in her ear that she was beautiful, but Lillian thought of none of these things; she was innocent and fair as a flower and passed on with her gliding grace till she stood before the door of the most famous sculptors in Rome and rang for admission.

There was one who had watched her for many days his name unknown to the girl—a young Englishman, called Rupert Tresilian, himself a sculptor and friend of the man's before whose door Lillian now stood.

"It is the loveliest face in all Rome," he thought, meeting her musing eyes.

## CHAPTER VII.

### LILLIAN'S LOVER.

When all is hushed in silence deep,  
And earth is lulled in balmy sleep,  
When lips nor move to sing or say,  
I think of him—far, far away.

LILLIAN was ushered at once into the presence of the great sculptor, Tito Valleria. She stood before him in all her flower-like grace, and that perfect ease of attitude which many queens have not, but which we may sometimes find in the walk and gesture of some humble peasant. Her throat was bare, she wore a loose crimson hood thrown carelessly over her head.

Was she not by birth an Allington? Had she not sprung from a race famed for its perfect physical beauty? Her ancestors had been men and women who were often called Fortune's favourites, so wealthy and luxurious had been their lives.

The sculptor advanced to meet her. He was a man of about fifty, with a gentle, kindly way with him, and he was thinking that here was a face and form of that rare loveliness which art desires to study and to work from—something wild and yet tender in her expression which charmed him inexpressibly, and which seemed as if this girl had a history to relate.

"You wish to sit to me?" he asked, watching the light stream through his studio window on to Lillian's shining hair, which fell in rippling clusters unbound to her waist.

Although an Italian he spoke English perfectly, having passed many years in London. Lillian had never been in the habit of consulting her own tastes or wishes, she was only a slave, accustomed to obey unquestioningly—a mere machine at the mercy of the man who had stolen her from her home.

"Yes, sir," she answered, folding her hands, but the flush stole to her cheek. She wondered what would be required of her as a model, and whether she would earn enough money to please the Indian.

At that moment the door opened and a young man entered. Lillian started as she saw it was he who had gazed at her so earnestly as she stood on the stone steps, but a few minutes ago, before the sculptor's palace, and her eyes fell beneath his with a delicate sensitiveness not lost on his observation.

Lillian remembered she had often seen him watching the windows of the little room where she and the Indian lived, and that somehow after he left the street she felt lonelier and her master's tasks seemed harder to execute.

Rupert Tresilian threw himself into a chair in a corner of the studio and nodded to the sculptor, taking up a book, the leaves of which he glanced at hastily, while over their edges he scrutinised Lillian's face from time to time.

"What do you think of our new model, Tresilian?" asked the sculptor, carelessly. "I prefer her to Lisa. What a divine Ceres, or Flora, or Hebe, she'd make for a group. Nothing of the contadina here, I fancy."

"She walks like a princess," answered Rupert, speaking rapidly in Italian: the sadness and the grace of Lillian's aspect had long interested him, and now he waited to hear her speak. Her very silence had a sort of proud, pathetic dignity, so different from the noisy, patois of the ordinary model.

"Have you anything to say to me?" asked Lillian, gravely.

"I haven't asked your name, my child; what is it?"

"They call me Aida."

"Ah! then you are from the East," said Rupert, rising as he spoke and approaching her; "of course you are, that sable-hued protector of yours is an Asiatic."

Lillian was silent—she never volunteered any remark of her own accord.

"Is he kind to you?" the young man asked, longing to hear her voice again.

"Sometimes," said Lillian, whom no torture could ever make untruthful.

"Poverina!" muttered the sculptor. "I don't like that 'sometimes'! I should say, my dear Rupert, our model has a hard time of it."

"But he can be no relation of hers. She is fair and golden-haired. Picture Valleria, a crown of flowers over that brow. See how pure, how delicate, is every line and curve—"

"She looks too good for the trade," said Valleria, smiling a little at Rupert's enthusiasm, "but nature often lies, and how can you know Aida is speaking the truth? She's not the first pretty little girl I darney, by a long way who's made herself out a victim, and worked largely on your sympathies and pocket."

"I want no pity," said Lillian, quietly, in Italian. "I only ask you to engage me; if not, please say so."

The sculptor's words had made her quiver, and a hot flame of rebellion for a second seemed to consume her. She wondered what her master would say if she went home unsuccessful.

"Will you let me paint you?" Rupert asked, after a pause, when the sculptor studied the workings of Lillian's face. "I am both an artist and a sculptor. If you are not too tired we can begin to-day. My studio is in this house, above the one we are now in."

"Take her away, then," said Valleria, laughing and shrugging his shoulders. "I can wait for my group, but your 'Margarita' must be finished for the coming exhibition. Aida will make a splendid heroine. The proud, sad lips must not look quite so stern, that is all."

Lillian followed Rupert up the wide stone staircase, and seemed resigned to everything. She had learnt to endure and be silent. But a change had come over her mood to-day; imagination was awaking; the sculptor's palace appeared wonderful and mysterious, as if she had entered a bright fairyland.

Beautiful flowers and statues graced the landings, the sound of the splash of a distant fountain mingled with the strains of a violin. At every corner some bright colour met her view. The world seemed changed as if by a miracle.

Rupert Tresilian was a very romantic young man, but he had no villain's instincts. He longed to study this beautiful child as he might a poem or gem or fresco. Many other girls in her position would have coquetted with him, or looked conscious after his many silent watchings and attentions.

Lillian for weeks had been an object of admiration to him; he had thrown little delicate nosegays over the grim walls of her deserted garden, and small parcels of sweets. He had heard her reading aloud of an evening to the man who owned her. He had seen her mute under blows and reproaches. Her musing, wistful eyes were often tearful. What was the desolation in her young life?

"I do not think I can do a stroke of work to-day, bellissima," said Rupert, throwing down his brush; "it's the heat, I suppose. Everyone seems inclined to be lazy here. Let's give up work, Aida."

Lillian was still silent. What right had she to answer remarks like these? Rupert meant to make her the model for his new picture, a priestess before a shrine. She was too sweet and innocent-looking for Lama, and almost too young for his Margarita.

Lillian glanced at him shyly, and wondered whether he thought her pretty. Why had he



tossed her those nosegays and sweets and waited outside her window so late at night? Rupert's hand, white and slender in shape and form, was delicate as a woman's; his eyes were dark and fathomless, with a depth and earnestness ever found in those of the true artist. He was tall, strong, and broad-chested, a little spoilt by his mother Lady Tresilian, who cared far more for Rupert than her elder son Herbert, the heir presumptive, she knew, to the Allington estates.

"I wish you would talk about yourself, Aida," said Rupert, rather impatient at Lillian's silence. "I might be able to do you a service, perhaps, if you are not happy in Rome."

Lillian started a little, and a drowsy warmth spread like sunlight over her features, it even infected the tones of her voice.

"I felt happy when I picked up your nosegay," she said, too innocent and child-like to analyse her emotions. "I kept them alive, too, as long as possible."

The lips had lost their hard, chiselled firmness as she spoke, they half quivered, and the grand, passionate eyelids drooped till the lashes swept her cheek.

"Poor child," said Rupert, with that delicious smile of his, half furtive, half caressive, that charmed women with its spiritual flash.

He touched the rippling masses of her hair in his careless, dreamy way; he wished to befriend and aid her, he divined the pain her solitary life held.

"If you would be candid with me, Aida, and tell me all about your life, I would get my mother to interest herself in you and take you over with her and my sister to England."

"I dare not," said Lillian, palpitating.

She had been beguiled into staying here longer than she ought, the Indian might be angry; she shuddered and almost regretted her confession of the joy those gifts had given her.

"I must go," she said, restlessly, and glanced at him with wonder and curiosity blended.

"And to-morrow, Aida, you will return?" he whispered, half entreatingly—he feared she might fade from his life like a dream.

She was so strange, so sad, and yet so entirely like his ideal, not only in her rare physical loveliness but in her endurance and repression.

"Oh, yes," said Lillian, shyly, and as she lifted her long lashes he saw they were wet with tears.

Meanwhile the Indian had not been alone—a quiet, simple-looking Englishman was with him to-day, no other than the detective who had never relinquished all hope of unearthing the author of the mysterious crime at the Manor House.

With marvellous patience he had persevered in his determination; Sir Richard had spared no money, but placed large sums at his disposal to enable him to prosecute his search, and the man had been in the east and unearthed Sir Richard's past, and from what he had there learnt he had slowly joined—so, at least, he believed—link after link in that terrible chain of vengeance woven by the merciless Asiatic.

Attired now as a simple vignette from Tuscany he sought the Indian and found him lying weak and prostrate on his couch, a tray of fruits on the table, and several Oriental maps on the walls.

Lillian had not returned; it was she, the beautiful young English girl he sought, and yet he was by no means certain he was on the right track of finding Sir Richard's lost child; he had mere suspicions to guide him, nothing more. After he had left the Indian, weak as he was, managed to crawl to the corridor, and looking out saw him leaning against a door a little lower down the street, as if waiting for someone.

A criminal is always suspicious, but of late he had been more careless and indifferent in his ways of living; he knew that he was doomed, he could not live long, and this knowledge made him less watchful. But now a new terror began to seize him—suppose, after all, those British bloodhounds, whom he had always dreaded, should hunt him down?

He hated Sir Richard—through whom the

woman he loved to madness had been slain: it was he who had murdered his enemy's first wife, it was he who had stolen his enemy's little daughter. But that enemy would never relinquish his search—English wrath and vengeance were terrible, he knew, and would pursue him to the bitter end.

Why had he not more dissembled—why have given a chance away? He and Lillian must leave Rome unseen this very night. And still the detective waited for Lillian's approach, and presently he saw her coming along the street, and the Indian returned to his couch, and clasping his hands uttered a sharp cry. He crouched and writhed on the floor and lifted his hands to Heaven; he gnashed his dark, sharp teeth, his thin, wasted features quivering with fury and despair.

It was thus Lillian found him as she entered the room, and ran hastily to his side. Never had she seen him so moved. He was generally cool, cynical and silent. She did not understand the passionate words he kept repeating in Hindostanee, and then he turned on her suddenly with the fury of a savage animal.

"Why are you so late?" he hissed between his teeth (he often brooded with exultation at his power over her). "Your duty was to return and tell me what Valleria said of you. Are you learning to defy and disobey me? Why don't you crouch and tremble? Slave, slave, that I have reared, are you going to escape me at the last because you think me weak and feeble? I could tear you limb from limb; I could chain you in a captive's cell; I could tame you with hunger and blows and kill you if I chose! On your knees at my feet ere I crush you and your beauty out of being!"

Lillian threw herself on her knees and clasped the hem of his robe. She believed he was mad, or what was the meaning of this new frenzy? He seized a rope and brought it furiously down on her white shoulders till she moaned with pain.

"Slave, slave," he kept repeating. "Oh, you hated English! Why did I spare her? Why not have completed my work?"

"Mercy, mercy!" sobbed Lillian, sick and delirious with agony and fear.

It was in her mind to rush from the room and entreat Rupert to save her. Then a change came over the Indian. He flung the rope away, buried his head in his hands, and remained quiet as a statue. His fury had passed, his hatred had been sated.

"Aida," he muttered, tottering back to his couch, and speaking hardly above a whisper, "we must leave Rome to-night. I am ill here; the air is bad and poisonous. Long before the moon rises we will be off. Get me some brandy and then put your things together."

Lillian looked at him, trembling in horrified awe, and made no reply. She was thinking of Rupert, and how could she let him know where they had gone?

"Leave Rome!" she repeated, scarcely heeding the words.

The light around her path was fading and all would soon be gloom.

"The serpent must have no trail if he would escape," he muttered. "Ay, leave Rome; return to the Tuscan woods; baffle them, dupe them, defy them, or fly beyond and bury ourselves in America's trackless forests. Fetch the brandy, Aida, I'm so weak."

Lillian silently prayed that he might die. She began to think that this man whom she had so long obeyed, who had been the terror of her childish years, should be abandoned to his fate.

"You are wondering if you shall run away," he said, with a bitter smile. "Well, then, wait, Aida, it will not be for long."

She knew then that he alluded to his own death.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE HOUSEKEEPER'S STORY.

The miserable have no other medicine,  
But only hope.

ZAMA said little when she heard of Sir

Richard's adoption of Clarice. She had found for a long time past that whatever she might say or do made very little difference to her husband; but one thing Zama had resolved on, and that was to leave the Manor House.

It was true that Sir Richard never remained here many months in the year, but he would not wholly abandon the place. His life was shaded by a great sorrow, which made him return with a sort of morbid attraction for the old house and park lands in which his ancestors had lived for so many generations.

In spite of their many quarrels, Zama and he were not separated. She loved him still in her wild way, but his grief had been to him a sort of awful consuming malady, which no woman's affection could ever assuage. She liked her life of ease and indolence too well to relinquish them; she had also unlimited money. She visited a good deal during the London season, and could please herself. Clarice, too, was an inoffensive sort of girl to live with. If now and then occasional stormy scenes took place between them, Clarice never offered strong or fierce opposition to Lady Allington.

Clarice was now about seventeen years of age, and Sir Richard had as yet no cause to be disappointed in her. No daughter could have loved him more tenderly. Her quietness also suited him. She would read aloud to him morning after morning, or ride or walk with him whenever he wished—in fact, she devoted herself to him with all the force of her nature. He never could be happy any more. The blows hurled at him had been too severe, but he was learning resignation.

One morning as Zama was taking a stroll round the grounds, Sir Richard and Clarice just having passed on horseback along the avenue of horse-chestnuts, she heard Mrs. Steele, the housekeeper, talking in a low voice to the gardener about some mysterious occurrence of years ago connected with the first Lady Allington.

She paused carelessly to listen, when some words were uttered that drove all the colour from her cheek and rivetted her to the spot. The garrulous Mrs. Steele seemed to have a relish for horrors. She was talking of the murder in the dawn when her mistress was found lifeless, with that sort of abominable relish for horrors we often find in country people, whose dull lives have been for years a mere routine.

"And it really seems but yesterday," the housekeeper continued, "since she and master came home. He had lived a many years in India, but they two were engaged to be married all along; and she was that beautiful in her white dress, 'twas no wonder a man should look at her as if he worshipped the very ground she walked on."

Zama had crept nearer. Only a low garden wall divided them. The gardener went on pruning his fruit trees and nodding his head from time to time.

"And now, Mr. Garbidge, I've altered my opinion with regard to them gipsies," said Mrs. Steele, speaking more rapidly. "I'm inclined to agree with that pleasant, quiet-spoken gentleman as calls 'ere to see master, the 'head detective. I say now that the same brain planned the two crimes, and the same hand struck both the blows that 'ave crushed our master to the dust. Sir Richard's wife was murdered by the same person as took away Miss Lillian."

Zama drew in her breath and panted hard. She recollected the dark savage face that had watched them at the windows of the West-end hotel where they were staying.

"Sir Richard's wife murdered!" she repeated, hardly daring to hear more.

Zama shivered and glanced around. Some birds were singing on a fragrant thornbush. The garden seats on the lawn beneath the trees looked peaceful enough and inviting, but Zama felt she could no longer rest in peace here. Why she might be chosen as the next victim in the family's annals. This revelation threw a new light on Sir Richard's weariness and dejection in the past; this had been the weight that ever pressed on his spirits in their earlier life together.

"Someone must hate him," muttered Zama, still lingering by the wall, while squirrels darted along the bright green sward, and the voices of the haymakers from the adjoining meadow rang out clearly on the fresh morning air. "Sir Richard has an implacable enemy."

She wanted to hear more, but Mrs. Steele was a frivolous soul. She passed on from one subject to another, and at last consoled herself by gathering a large cabbage leaf full of the finest queen's heart strawberries she could find, Garbidge assisting and scaring away various thieving blackbirds that were feeding on the delicious fruit.

Zama went back slowly to the Manor House, and then she sought Mrs. Steele. Her curiosity was aroused as well as her terror, and the housekeeper's story was a truly thrilling one. She had never found so attentive a listener. Here at last was a pretext to leave the Manor House.

Zama wanted to go to Scarborough. She loved dress, excitement and gaiety, and knew that at one of the grandest hotels in Scarborough she would be an object of envy and admiration, the cynosure, indeed, of every eye.

"I don't wonder, my lady, that you should feel nervous," said Mrs. Steele, who with the other servants had managed to "put up" with Lady Allington's ways; "it's been on the tip of my tongue for a long time, that story I've just related, only I feared it might torment you or unsettle you at the Manor House."

"I loathe it," said Zama, looking round the library where she and Mrs. Steele were sitting. "I'm always miserable in the country. Sir Richard mopes here by himself; he wants society and change. I shall try, Mrs. Steele, and get him off to Scarborough and persuade him to sell this gloomy old place."

The housekeeper preserved a respectful silence.

"Why doesn't Sir Richard keep a yacht and let us go on the sea sometimes?" asked Zama, speaking her thoughts aloud. "Why cling to this wretched Bluebeard castle. There are pretty little white villas too in Italy and Southern France where we could be happy, whereas here—"

She paused, shivered again, and contemplated several fine fissures in the ceiling.

"Here is master and Miss Clarice riding along the avenue," cried Mrs. Steele, hurrying from the room. "That was a strange idea, my lady, his adopting that girl. I've nothing to say against Miss Clarice—sometimes I think she's a trifle sly—but I couldn't abide a stranger's child about the place."

Zama smiled and shrugged her handsome shoulders. She had suffered a good deal from languor and malaise here; she now saw an opportunity to escape. She went out into the hall to welcome Sir Richard, and then followed him into the library, while Clarice ran upstairs to change her riding-habit.

Mary Bunce, Mrs. Steele's niece, was now appointed maid to Clarice, for Zama had engaged a very fashionable French lady's-maid to wait on her, who upset Mrs. Steele's notions of propriety, flirted with the men-servants, and invariably made that excellent woman "coil up" whenever she came in her way.

"I've had such a strange adventure, Mary," Clarice said, laughing and chatting freely, as was her wont with the girl. "You know I rode 'Blue Peter'; he's rather a fiddle-headed animal and pulls your arms out. As Sir Richard rode into the village to pay a bill, I took him round the end of the common alone, and Blue Peter ran away. I believe he'd have smashed his head and mine against that large wall they're building, but a gentleman galloped up and caught his bridle, and then I was able to pull him up myself."

"I daresay, miss, you'll see the gentleman again," said Mary, consolingly. "Most likely at church; he's perhaps visiting with some of the quality in the neighbourhood."

"He was extremely handsome. I don't as a rule care a fig for perfect features and faultless curves, because then nature so often puts all her goods in the shop window," said Clarice,

lightly; "but there was something so kind and pleasant in his manner which was quite charming."

She thought a good deal of her adventure, and wondered who the gallant knight could be who had ridden up in her distress and checked Blue Peter's vicious propensities. Clarice was naturally fond of excitement, and her life here was at times dull and monotonous. Sir Richard and Zama were now tête-à-tête in the library. He was listening silently to his wife's entreaties to leave the Manor House.

"You cannot for one moment imagine, Richard, that I injured poor Lillian," she said, in a tremulous voice. "I would give anything to restore your happiness, and I think you ought to consider my wishes in the matter. Why not sell the Manor House and let us travel abroad?"

Sir Richard lifted his heavy eyes and looked at her for a few minutes in silence. Then he came closer and laid an arm around her waist.

"No, Zama, I have long thought you innocent of my poor Lily's loss, but agony warped my judgment, almost mastered my reason for the moment. I will be just; I will atone for my suspicion. We will leave the Manor House for ever since it is your wish."

She grasped his hand. Tears streamed down her cheeks—tears of thankfulness that he loved her and suspected her of no evil designs. Her love for Sir Richard was the master-passion of her life, and spite of all her faults Zama could love.

"My dearest, confide in me," she said, tenderly. "Let us together seek your enemy. These dreadful crimes must be the work of one man."

"I believe so at last," he said, hoarsely. "Do you not know what the scripture says? 'The sins of the fathers shall be visited on the children.' My poor Lillian is suffering perhaps for her father's sin."

His face was livid as he met Zama's glance of adoring love.

"You must have injured someone out in India," she said, clasping his hand.

Sir Richard bowed his head.

"A woman there loved and died for me!" he whispered. "I was sorely tempted. Women are killed in India who have deceived men."

"And you have no idea who sought to avenge her death?" Zama asked, and again saw in her imagination the dark face of the Indian uplifted with its terrible look of hate.

"Yes," he faltered, "there was one, a savage, a barbarian, who loved her too. He had bathed his hands in his enemy's blood! A dagger would glitter as he caressed. He was full of frenzy, of jealousy, and of passion—a terrible being, remorseless, daring and unbridled in his resolve—an Indian called Djalmu."

"He must be found," said Zama, passionately. "I will devote my life if you will to seek him and avenge your wrongs."

"Do you not see I have not long to live?" Sir Richard asked, with his sad smile. "Let us remain together till the end."

(To be Continued.)

#### IN THE WINE VATS.

CAN it be true that Italian ladies go off to tread the wine vats, at certain seasons of the year? The process is simple. The grapes are thrown into an enormous vat, where the juice is trampled out of them by the bare feet. At this stage of the vintage you may see hundreds of the young ladies of the city of Perugia coming forth in groups in the morning, beaming with pleasant mystery and excitement. They are all off to the country to tread in the wine presses. It is a novel holiday for them besides being a most salutary exercise. Even prim old dowagers are known to "wade in" and banish the rheumatism by a half day's exercise in the wine press. Apart from the healthful exercise of tramping, the new mash acts as a bath to the

limbs, while the uprising fumes are considered eminently stomachic. After the treading performance, these ladies wash themselves in hot wine, taking a moderate decoction internally for the stomach's sake. The effect is pleasant and rejuvenating, and is especially noticeable in the vigour with which they participate in the dance, which is the usual sequel to their novel labour.

#### WOMAN'S WILFULNESS.

A poor woman lay very ill in her scantily-furnished home in Sheffield. The doctor was sent for and came. He at once saw that her case was a very grave one, and that she had, as he thought, little chance of recovery, even if she could get the nourishment her illness required. As he was about to leave, the question was put: "When should we send for you again, doctor?" "Well," was the reply, as he looked at the poor woman, and then at her wretched surroundings, "I don't think you need send for me again. She cannot possibly get better; and to save you further trouble I'll just write you out a certificate for her burial." And he did. After the doctor departed, the woman—women are always wilful—got better rapidly. She has now completely recovered, and goes about carrying her burial certificate with her.

#### THE MARRIAGE STATE.

THE thoughtlessness with which many young people enter the marriage state is almost incredible. Sometimes the mere fun of the thing seems a sufficient motive; sometimes mere passions; at others the mere desire for greater convenience. Nor is this true only of the ignorant and vulgar. Let anyone familiar with literature recall the biographies of eminent men in which there is a half-veiled background that hints of unhappy homes, and he will be surprised at their number. We remember many such at this moment, though to mention their names would seem an injustice to the dead and the living.

An unhappy marriage blights the lives of the contracting parties. And the significance of marriage extends far beyond individual happiness. It decides, almost without appeal, the prosperity of the country. Let us have pure and happy homes, and we can weather any number of panics, and a generation of hard times. But if we have homes full of discord and impurity and unloveliness, we shall have suffering and shame and at last a wrecked nation. The increase of divorces in our country tells a sad story, and calls for the attention of all thinking people.—H.

A SURGEON in the French navy, who has explored some portion of the boundary region between Peru and Brazil, had the good fortune to find in flower there the plant from which the Peruvian Indians make the deadly poison which they use on their arrows. He thus ascertained that their arrow poison is not the same as the curare of Guiana.

A GERMAN traveller in Africa characterises a people he came across as "intensely black, dolichocephalic and platyrrhine, prognathous, dichotomatic and dolichodactylic." This reads like some kind of diacky-lum plaster.

THERE is a picture of a child at the Royal Academy, which all the critics have been particularly requested to give the full name of. But it is the reason assigned for the request that is curious. It appears that the father of the child has left his home, and it is thought that if he sees the praises awarded to the picture of his offspring he will return to it, and to its mother. This seems to be a better way of trying to reach a truant husband than employing detectives. It is delicate, and therefore more pleasant, while it is certainly much cheaper.





[GOING TO ASTON WOODS.]

## HER HUSBAND'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

*"Frank Bertram's Wife," "Strong Temptation," &c., &c.*

### CHAPTER X.

IN THE WOOD.

Take her up tenderly,  
Lift her with care,  
Fashioned so slenderly,  
So young and so fair.

HOOD.

"Did you ever live in London, Miss Keith?" asked the Earl of Fairleigh, as they sat together in the summer twilight, for the nursery detained Mrs. Granville some time, and their tête-à-tête became a prolonged one. "It has struck me for a long while that you cannot be a native of Aston."

"Yes, I lived in London for a few months before I came here. I have been here nearly two years."

"I wonder your friends like to spare you."

Rosamond smiled a little drearily.

"I used to live with my guardian, Mr. Ashley, until his wife died, and then I came here."

"Then you are like myself, not rich in relations."

"I don't think I have a relation in the world. When I was at school I used to think no one else could be so lonely."

"It can't be so very long ago," smiling.

"You speak as though it was half a century."

"It is nearly three years, and so much has happened since."

Lord Fairleigh looked astonished. He thought very little could possibly happen at quiet Aston.

"I was at school seven years," went on Rosamond, simply. "I used to hate the very sight of the walls. They seemed to me like a prison."

"But surely you went home sometimes."

"I had no home."

"But your guardians."

"I don't think it was their fault. It was arranged that I should not see either of them until I was eighteen."

"And then you went to Mr. Ashley."

"No, I went to Lord Desmond first. I lived at the Towers for some months. I was so happy."

"Lord Desmond is one of the most honourable men I know."

"Yes, I liked him very much."

"Do you speak only in the past tense, Miss Keith?"

"Our paths in life were widely separated," she answered, quickly, seeing her mistake.

"When I lived at Desmond Towers I thought I was an heiress."

"Lady Desmond is very fascinating, is she not?" trying to change the subject of Rosamond's loss of fortune.

"She is charming. Have you never seen her?"

"No. I knew her brother slightly. Perhaps you have met him—Sir Reginald Dane of Allerton."

"Yes," simply. "I have met him."

"I suppose you have heard of his sudden change of fortune?"

"No, I have heard nothing."

"Two years ago Dane was in dreadful embarrassment. Allerton was mortgaged to its full value, and everyone said he would have to sell the place or go and live quietly abroad."

"Yes," with a pain at her heart. "I have heard so."

"Well, by some happy chance he thought occurred to him coal might be found on the estate. The attempt was made, a mine discovered, and now Allerton is unencumbered,

and Sir Reginald perfectly free from all pecuniary troubles."

"How glad he must be. Is he married?"

"No," smiling. "Report goes that he was engaged to an heiress, and she died within a week of their wedding-day. Certainly he has altered very much lately, and though he is a favourite in every ball-room, I never heard his name linked with any lady's; but he is young yet."

To Rosamond the earl's words brought back the last time she had seen Reginald Dane with painful vividness. She could think of that by-gone time now more as though she had been a spectator than an actor in it. She knew that she, the child Rosamond, had poured out her fresh young heart on the baronet in trusting faith, but the woman's eye saw what the child had been blind to—Sir Reginald had wooed the heiress, not the girl herself, and yet thought she sadly, "He loved me at the last, I think."

I want you to know my Rosamond just as she was. She had loved Rex with a child's love—loved him dearly. When she awoke to find her idol merely clay, she had suffered deeply; that suffering had left its mark on her character, but the love that deceit had killed was not to be the master passion of her life—the passion that would live amidst trials and survive through bitterest suffering was yet to come.

"Will you do one thing for me?" she asked the earl, hiding her agitated face from his view in the summer gloaming. "Will you not tell the Granvilles I lived at Desmond Towers?"

He was surprised at the request, but agreed at once.

"All is so different now," added Rosamond. "I don't want anyone to know I once believed myself an heiress."

"I wish from the bottom of my heart I had never recalled a painful subject to you. It was purely accidental."

"It is not painful now. Did you say you were a friend of Sir Reginald, Lord Fairleigh?"

He shook his head.

"I have known him for seven or eight years, but we are not friends."

There was such a peculiar stress on the denial that Rosamond asked:

"Do you mean that you are enemies?"

"No," laughing, "we are not 'unfriends,' as children say, but we have not one thought in common. For one thing, Reginald Dane is one of the luckiest men I ever met, and I am not one of fortune's favourites."

"Lucky!" thinking of the days when she had known him. "Do you mean that he is rich?"

"I will tell you. Remember it is the popular version—I can't vouch for the truth of it, because I have been absent from England a long while. He came into a handsome property and ran through it by his extravagances. He was then engaged to an heiress—I can't tell you her name, but they say she was the loveliest girl in London—whose money was to restore all the splendours of Allerton, and as though fortune had not been kind enough to him, coal is found on his estate, and he will have more money all his days than he can possibly spend."

"But you say the heiress died."

"Sitting in the dark, why didn't you ring for lights, Rosamond?" asked Mrs. Granville, coming in suddenly and finding the two in the twilight.

"I did not think of it," replied Miss Keith.

She was very silent the rest of the evening; that conversation had carried her back to the past, to the happiness that had been hers two years ago. In spite of all she was glad that fortune had smiled on Reginald. Did he ever regret her, she wondered. How strange it had been to hear a version of her own story from Lord Fairleigh. Then her thoughts flew back to the earl himself.

"I don't believe he is happy," she decided, swiftly, "or why would he talk of a hidden sorrow? I wonder if his wife was fond of him? I don't like him myself, but I can quite understand a woman worshipping him."

Somehow or other from that night forward Rosamond tired of her tranquil life at Aston Rectory—a keen longing for a wider sphere, a larger glimpse of the world came to her; this had begun before Lord Fairleigh arrived, his presence increased it. Rosamond was like Tennyson's Marianna in the "Meated Grange," "awary."

She was nearly twenty-one. The years we call our brightest were slipping by her fast, she was wasting them; she could not live for ever at Aston; dearly as she had grown to love the Granvilles she pined for a change. After that evening she ceased to shun Lord Fairleigh, when her friends sang his praises she uttered no dissenting word, she treated him with the simple cordiality that was her nature, only she never felt entirely at her ease with him, and she wondered more and more each day that passed whether his young wife's death was the only cause of the grave sadness that seemed to have taken possession of him.

One morning unexpectedly Harold Ashley came down to the rectory; he had often been before, and both the Granvilles liked him. Rosamond loved him as a brother and generally enjoyed his visits thoroughly, but this time his coming was unwelcome to her, she felt instinctively he came for a purpose and she shrank from hearing it.

Her pride, her sensitiveness was annoyed that others should see clearly what was his object. Mrs. Granville manoeuvred to leave them together, they were placed side by side at meals, and openly paired off in walks and drives. Rosamond resented it. What must Lord Fairleigh think of it? She could only imagine, for the peer never expressed any opinion, he was gravely courteous to Harold, but the presence of a stranger made him more silent and thoughtful than usual.

Harold stayed three days. Rosamond, repenting of her unkindness, walked with him to the railway station on the afternoon of his departure. He would not have felt so happy, poor fellow, had he known he owed the attention only to her relief at his leaving.

"Were you surprised to see me, Rose?" he asked, as they walked slowly through the country lanes.

"I am never surprised at anything," with an uneasy look in her hazel eyes.

"Can you guess at all why I came?"

"To see me: you have adopted me as a sister and so you think it your duty to look after me sometimes."

He dropped the light bag he was carrying and caught both her hands in his.

"Rosamond, my darling, I came to see you, and to ask you a question: it is nearly two years since you told me my love was all in vain. I have waited patiently, surely the old wound has healed now, darling; won't you accept my love?"

For one instant the girl hesitated; she was so unutterably tired of her present life, she so longed for a break in its monotony, that for a moment she wavered, but Harold Ashley deserved better things than an empty heart, and Rosamond was too noble to take all and to give nothing.

"Oh, Harold, Harold, why do you waste your thoughts on me? I can never give you any but the same answer; there are others ten times more worthy than I."

"There is but one Rosamond, Rose, in all the world—you are the only one for me."

"Dear," said the girl, slowly, "I am so sorry, I hate myself for being so ungrateful, as cold and heartless. Only, Harold, I shall never care for you as you wish me."

"Is it the past?" he asked, a little eagerly.

"No," and she spoke with a firm decision which told him how hopeless was his cause. "I only know, Harold, I am not the sort of girl to marry without love, and I don't love you in that way."

He bore it bravely, loving her madly, intensely as he did he could not blame her for being true to her own heart; he should love her always, he told her and he could not promise to forget his hopes, but he would never mention them again to her, and she must look on him as her true friend always; but in spite of his generosity and her brave spirit, they parted sadly and he returned to London.

As Rosamond went slowly homewards a great sorrow was at her heart; did love bring no happiness after all? She had loved Reginald and Harold Ashley had loved her, and what had their love brought to either of them but disappointment? She felt uncomfortable when she met Mrs. Granville, who had come part of the way to meet her; she knew her friend guessed the question that had been asked almost before she said with a smile:

"Are we to lose you, Rosamond?"

"Not in the way you mean, dear Mrs. Granville, but I think we shall soon have to part."

The Rectory's wife looked aggrieved, to part with Rosamond on her marriage to a well-to-do gentleman was one thing, to part with her for any other reason was very different.

"Are you growing tired of us, dear?"

"I think I am growing tired of myself," sadly. "I seem to bring nothing but pain and sorrow to everyone who cares for me."

"Poor Mr. Ashley."

"He isn't poor a bit. I'm sure it's a good thing for him not to be troubled with such a contrary mortal as I am."

"But he does not think so."

"Don't tell Mr. Granville," whispered Rosamond, "though I am afraid he will guess. How you came to know I can't imagine."

"My dear, we have eyes."

"So have I, but I saw nothing."

"Lookers on proverbially see the most. Lord Fairleigh himself said it was plain enough what Mr. Ashley came here for."

Rosamond flushed hotly.

"Lord Fairleigh has no right to say such things."

And forthwith she wondered if this was why the earl had avoided her all through Harold's visit. Presently she recovered her temper sufficiently to inquire:

"Is Lord Fairleigh going to stay here for ever? I should have thought his family would

have sent the town crier after him long before this."

"He has no family, Rosamond. I think he likes being here, and it is a great pleasure to us to have him."

"And how you dreaded his coming beforehand, you inconsistent woman."

"And you took his part. We have changed sides now. Rose, why is it you have never a kind word to say for the earl?"

"I am a rank republican. I don't care for the nobility."

"I wonder if you will ever care for anyone, Rosamond."

"Let's hope not. As I'm a republican, I might place my affections on a chimney sweep, you know, or a potatoe seller. I'm very fond of hot roast potatoes."

"Make haste down, tea is just ready."

They had reached the rectory. Rosamond was walking slowly upstairs.

"I don't think I will come down to tea," replied the girl, wearily. "I have a dreadful headache, and I believe my eyes are red."

So Mrs. Granville went in alone to the gentlemen, and made the best excuses she could for the truant. Rosamond, however, had no intention of remaining in her own room. It was barely eight o'clock, and a lovely summer evening. Had not Mrs. Granville joined her she would have gone to the woods instead of coming home. Why should she not go now. Snatching up her gown hat she was starting, when little Lily Granville trotted into the room.

"I can't stay now, dearie," said Rosamond, kindly. "Tell mamma I've gone to the woods if she asks you, Lily. I'll bring you home some flowers perhaps."

And with a quick step she went down the back staircase and out at the side door. The woods were not ten minutes walk, and by the time Rosamond had settled herself in her favourite nook under the spreading trees she felt quite sure she had done the best thing in the world for her headache.

The soft air fanned her cheeks pleasantly. The nightingale's notes sounded far away. It was very still and peaceful; the day had been intensely hot; the air had an intense calm, and Rosamond's clear eyes lost their tired, weary look as the long lashes fell over them, and she forgot the difficult problem of what happiness love can bring in sleep.

She awoke with a shiver to hear a heavy peal of thunder, and find that the soaking rain was pouring down on her summer dress. She had hardly been asleep an hour, and yet how changed everything was. The sky was black with clouds. She could hardly see which way to turn, except when a vivid flash of lightning made the scene for a moment dazzlingly bright. Dripping, shivering, yet half awake, Rosamond tried to realise her position.

She walked on and on, losing herself in the mazes of the wood. By daylight she knew it well, but here in the dark, in this pitiless storm, she felt in a strange place. She wandered on. Fright had restored her faculties, but now it was too late.

She had strayed into the thickest part of the wood. She knew her danger, knew that it would be a miracle—humanly speaking—if the cruel lightning did not strike her; she knew that there was but little chance of her returning to the rectory to take up the quiet life which was growing so tedious to her, but it never occurred to her to sorrow. Life had no happiness in store for her, she told herself.

At last the thunder died away; the rain still came down. If there had but been a moon, Rosamond's difficulties would have been at an end, but there was none—no solitary star; all around was dark. Dark black shadows seemed to people the wood.

"I must stay here all night," thought our heroine. "How very, very long it will seem till the morning. I wonder if Mrs. Granville will be frightened, and what Lord Fairleigh will say," and then she scolded herself for that last thought. "I don't suppose I shall ever see him again—why need I think about him. It is deadly, deadly cold. I think a night in this



wood will kill me. Well, there is no one to be very sorry."

At first no one missed Rosamond at the rectory. Not till the storm began did Mrs. Granville imagine she was out of doors; then when the thunder was at its worst the housemaid sought her mistress.

"I am afraid there's some accident come to Miss Keith, ma'am, or she never would stay out in such a storm as this."

"She's not out, Jane; she came in with me just before tea."

"Then she's gone out again, ma'am, for she is not in her room now. Little Miss Lily told me while you were at tea, ma'am, that her aunt had gone to the woods."

Full of an undefined dread, Mrs. Granville sought her husband. She went straight to his study, where she found him with the earl.

"William," full of her tidings, "what is to be done. Rosamond is out in this storm?"

"Out!—impossible!"

"She started while we were at tea, and no one has seen her since."

"The woods—in such a storm as this! Why, Mary, she would be killed!"

The earl interrupted him in a grave, stern voice:

"Do you mean Aston Woods?"

"Yes, those woods close to the village."

"Someone must go and look for her at once," declared Lord Fairleigh. "It may be too late even now."

The rector rose immediately. To do him justice he would have done anything in his power for the girl who formed part of his home, but his wife burst into tears and implored him not to risk his life.

"Think of the children. Oh, William, don't go."

"I must, dear. Remember, Mary, the poor girl has no friends near but us. If Mr. Ashley were here he might have a better claim."

Mrs. Granville shook her head.

"He has no claim on Rosamond."

"Granville," said the earl, putting his hand on his friend's shoulder, "your wife is right—you're too valuable a life to risk. Let me go!"

"You!"

"Yes," calmly. "I have no wife or little girls to think of."

"But," hesitating, "you do not know the woods."

"I think I do. I have been through them several times. I shall want a lantern."

Very calmly, and yet with great haste, he made his preparations. He put on a macintosh of the rector's, and took his fishing flask full of brandy in his pocket. Mrs. Granville gave him a warm shawl, saying Rosamond had nothing over her thin dress. Then the lantern was brought. It was all the work of a few moments.

"Hugh," said the rector, "I don't half like this. Miss Keith has no claim on you. She has every claim on me, and I should run no greater risk than you are doing."

"Remember your wife and children. Besides, I have been out in worse storms than this. I will bring her to you if I am in time."

He was an hour-and-a-half before he found any trace of the girl he sought. Then he picked up a little glove. Evidently she had been there. The storm was over now; the rain fell still, but not in the relentless downpour it had done; the lantern gave a strong light, and Lord Fairleigh fought his way bravely among the brushwood, but it seemed all in vain.

At last, as he was giving up hope, he saw a mass of something white lying on the ground against a tree. His heart beat quicker as he drew near. It was Rosamond. Her hat had fallen off; her ungloved hands fell at her side; her large eyes were closed. It seemed to Hugh that Heaven's peace was already stamped upon her face. For one second he believed he had come too late.

"Miss Keith?"

She never stirred; she gave no sign of life.

He knelt down by her and poured some of the brandy between her clenched teeth. Then he began to chafe her icy hands, but still there came no sign of returning life to reward his efforts.

Her wet dress clung round her. The ground on which she lay was soaking wet. Hugh spread Mrs. Granville's shawl all round her to try to restore warmth. Then he sat down by her and once more put the flask to her lips. Would those eyes never open again? Was he never more to hear the voice which, despite his utmost efforts, had crept into his heart? It seemed not.

"Rosamond," the name wrung from him by his distress, "Rosamond, wake, my darling; speak to me!"

He bent down, this earl, whose heart the Granvilles thought buried in his wife's grave—he bent down and pressed his lips to Rosamond's in a long, lingering pressure. It was years since he had kissed a woman, and he had thought he should never kiss another. The touch of his lips seemed to act as a spell to recall her wandering spirit. Rosamond opened her eyes and looked slowly round her.

"Where am I?"

"Here in Aston Woods. You have been caught in the storm."

"Oh, I remember," very faintly. "I thought I was going to die. I was so frightened."

"We were very anxious about you. You must let me take you home now."

"Did you come to look for me?"

"Yes."

There was a strange look in her hazel eyes. Reason's powers were not all back; the mind tottered at the entrance of its prison house. Rosamond betrayed the secret she was herself hardly conscious of, and which she would at another moment have guarded with her life.

"Did they ask you to come?"

"No, I came of my own accord."

"I am very glad, very glad. You can't hate me quite."

He knew he must have known that her spirit had not fully re-entered its resting place, that her mind was still on the borderland of unconscionness, or surely he would not have answered:

"Who could hate you, Rosamond? You must let me take you home now or you will be very ill."

He raised her gently from the ground, and offered her his arm. For one minute she refused it, the next she clung tottering to him for support.

"I cannot walk," she moaned, "and the pain is so bad. My foot is broken, I think."

"You have sprained it, perhaps. Let me carry you."

"Couldn't you leave me here. The storm is over now, and you could tell Mrs. Granville I was better."

Consciousness had returned fully now.

"But, Miss Keith, if your foot is really hurt you will not be able to walk for some days, and no carriage could come for you here."

"But why should I trouble you?"

"Am I so very obnoxious to you," he whispered gravely.

Then without waiting for any reply he gathered her in his arms and began the return to Aston Rectory.

"Let me take the lantern," said Rosamond, "Lord Fairleigh, it is very late?"

"Past eleven, I expect."

"They will all be in bed."

"Do you think they could go to bed whilst you were perhaps in danger?"

"I have not thanked you yet."

"Don't thank me at all. Anyone else in my place would have done the same."

Then as he remembered all the incidents of her recovery to consciousness he felt very glad no one else had had the chance of doing quite the same.

"I wish Mr. Ashley were here he would thank you better than I can," alluding to her guardian.

"I don't want his thanks," alluding to

Harold, her supposed lover, "he is nothing to me."

"But he is a great deal to me."

"So I have heard. This is hardly the time for congratulations, but perhaps you will let me wish you all happiness."

"Thank you," not in the least understanding his meaning. Then in a weak voice: "My foot is so painful I can't talk any more."

Her head fell back on his shoulder. If he had not carried the lantern it would have fallen from her grasp. And when they reached the rectory Hugh was not surprised to find that she had fainted for the second time.

## CHAPTER XI.

SIR REGINALD IS STILL HOPEFUL.

Hope told a flattering tale,  
Delusive, vain, and hollow;  
Ah, let not hope prevail,  
Lest disappointment follow.

WE must go back nearly eighteen months to the Christmas after Mrs. Ashley's death. Sir Reginald Dane spent it at Desmond Towers. He was full of hope. Already success had dawned on his efforts. Already the mine on his estate was becoming very profitable. There seemed little doubt that in a few months time the mortgages on Allerton would be paid and his old home be redeemed from all chance of falling into the hands of strangers.

Once again he sat alone with his sister in her tasteful boudoir. Once again their heads were in close consultation in the winter firelight, and now, as then, it was the marchioness who made plans, and was the more hopeful of the two. Sir Reginald had a strange, weary look on his handsome face as though he missed something, without which success itself was valueless to him.

"Cheer up," cried Georgie, brightly. "I cannot believe that Rosamond is lost to you; she loved you dearly last spring. A woman's heart does not change in a few months."

"You forget she heard the whole of our conversation. She knows that my love was not a disinterested one?"

"But it is disinterested enough now. You will be rich soon; she has stripped herself of everything; it is a generous act enough to make penniless girl Lady Dane and mistress of Allerton."

Sir Reginald sat in deep thought.

"And you have never seen her since?"

"Never once; the whole time we were in London I never came across her, and yet I know she was there—she is staying with the Ashleys."

"But your husband is her guardian, too?"

"You knew by her father's will she came of age at eighteen, so really she requires no guardian. Allick would do anything in the world for her, but I do not think he liked her being taken so thoroughly out of our hands."

"What sort of people are the Ashleys?"

"You saw them surely?"

"Yes; but he must have a wife or something. Rosamond could not be shut up alone with an old lawyer."

"I daresay he is married, I really do not know."

"I have a great mind to go to Bedford Square."

"I think it would be your best plan; I am quite sure Mr. Ashley looks on us as very bad associates for his ward. He would not hesitate to suppress letters. He may want Rosamond to marry his son—I believe he has one."

That suggestion was enough for Sir Reginald, under other circumstances he might have waited until his prosperity was more certain, but at the thought of a rival he could brook no delay. The very next day he went up to London and called on Mr. Ashley, not at his official residence, but at the house in Bedford Square.

He was shown into the drawing-room which, in Mrs. Ashley's lifetime, had been such a pleasant, home-like apartment, now it was seldom or ever used; it had a dull, gloomy air, the furni-

ture was shrouded in brown holland, the piano was closely shut, no vestige of a fire burned in the grate: the truth was the lawyer and his son only received their intimates, and these were shown into the study or dining-room, so the more formal reception room had naturally grown into disuse.

Sir Reginald was kept waiting nearly a quarter of an hour; he spent it in wondering how the Rosamond he remembered could bear to live in such a gloomy place, his pretty, bird-like, garden rose. What a dull, cheerless prison for her to bloom in; he listened eagerly, hoping to hear the sound of her voice in the distance, but nothing broke the silence which seemed to overshadow the house.

Mr. Ashley came in at last: his wife's death had left its mark on him. Instead of the hale, cheerful man of business Sir Reginald remembered there entered one who had evidently suffered severely, whom some great blow seemed to have aged suddenly.

"I fear you have not been well," he began, with a kindly smile, and extending his hand.

The solicitor did not refuse the outstretched hand, he was too much of a man of the world to blame Sir Reginald extravagantly for the part he had played; his old friend's memory was cleared from blame, that friend's daughter was safe from the dangers of meeting Sir Reginald, so that her guardian could afford to be gracious to the baronet.

"I am well enough," he answered, simply; "my trouble has told on me, that is all: my wife's loss was so unexpected that it was the more bitter."

"I beg your pardon for my carelessness, I had not heard of your sorrow."

"It is some months old now, Sir Reginald, only an old man does not soon forget."

They sat in silence for some minutes.

"Mr. Ashley," began Sir Reginald, at last, "I daresay you can guess the object of my coming."

The lawyer shook his head.

"I do not like guessing, Sir Reginald, I would rather you should tell me."

"I have come to tell you that my fortune has improved—in a very short time the last mortgage on Allerton will be paid."

"I am glad to hear it—very, but yet I hardly understand how—"

"It does affect you," interrupted Rex, "because I value wealth and prosperity only for Miss Keith's sake. I have come to ask you to let me see your ward and plead my own cause with her."

For a few moments the elder man was silent. He could not doubt the sincerity of his visitor. He knew that Sir Reginald was now a splendid parti for Rosamond, but he hesitated; he knew all she had suffered through this man, and he was unwilling to do anything that might renew that suffering.

"You have no right to refuse," broke in the baronet, with just a shade of hauteur in his manner. "I will take no denial from you. I will see Rosamond and hear my fate from her own lips."

Those words destroyed his last chance. If Mrs. Ashley had felt a little disposed to yield to the lover's eagerness he was the last man in the world to be coerced against his will. He was peculiarly jealous of his own authority, and Sir Reginald's speech angered him.

"I cannot hinder you," he answered at last, a little stiffly. "Miss Keith, by her father's will, is now her own mistress. I have no right to dictate to her the visitors she receives."

"Then you will let me see her?"

"I have said before I cannot prevent it. I would gladly spare my ward any sorrow, but in this case I am powerless."

"You think, then, I shall bring her sorrow? You are frank, Mr. Ashley."

"I know that you brought on her a sorrow so heavy that it changed her from a careless girl to a sad, thoughtful woman. I know that the worst trouble of her life came to her through you. I have no wish to penetrate into the future, but the past I cannot forget."

Sir Reginald rose.

"Will you send Miss Keith to me here, or shall I see her in another apartment?"

It was Mr. Ashley's time to look surprised now.

"You surely did not think Miss Keith was living here?"

"Yes," with an unmistakable disappointment in his voice. "I had been told she resided here with you."

"Then your informant made a great mistake. Miss Keith left here in the early autumn, very soon after my wife's death. She has never been here since, nor do I expect her. A widower's lonely household is not the place for her to pay a prolonged visit from a distance."

"Do you mean that she is away from London, Mr. Ashley?"

"She is well, and time is curing the wound your faithlessness inflicted. So much I may tell you, Sir Reginald."

"I am not faithless; I wish I could be. Once more, Mr. Ashley, will you give me Rosamond's address? To prolong this interview is useless since your opinion of me is evidently a poor one."

"Sir Reginald, before Rosamond Keith left my house she came to me in my study, and asked me to do something for her. It was to promise her solemnly that I would not give you or any member of your family her address. I pleaded for you—you may be surprised at this, but it is the truth—for I thought a day might come when you would regret the treasure you had spurned. I begged of Rosamond to let me be the judge, and if I thought you sincere to tell you where she was."

"How I have wronged you! And what was her reply?"

"She refused steadily. Nothing, she said, could give her back the trust she had lost. Her one prayer was to forget you. Sir Reginald, my duty, my cares, were for her, not for you. Can you wonder that, being thus urged, I gave the promise, and having given it, am bound to keep it?"

Strange to say, the baronet did not lose hope. He argued Rosamond must love him, or she would not be so eager to forget him.

"I cannot urge you," he returned; "I see you have no alternative. But one question I must put: Is there any truth in the report that she is to marry your son?"

"Not the slightest. You may trust my word. Rosamond Keith has no other lover but yourself."

And he believed he spoke the truth.

"And she is away?"

"She has hidden herself so skilfully that I doubt your finding her. If you heard the name of the place you would not know where it was situated."

And this speech conveyed to Rex the idea that the girl his own folly had lost was in a foreign land. He left Mr. Ashley terribly disappointed, but yet not doubting his power to win her if he could only find her. That henceforward would be his quest. Allerton once free, his life's work would be to seek for Rosamond.

(To be Continued.)

## A PAPER STOVE.

PERHAPS the most remarkable object ever fashioned from paper was a fire-stove with a cheerful fire burning in it. We have from time to time noted the announcements of newly-invented railway carriages and carriage wheels, chimney pots, flour-barrels, cottage-walls, roofing-tiles, and bricks and tiles for stamping, all made of paper. A material capable of so many uses, so diversified in character, is obviously destined to play a very important part in our manufacturing future. Articles of this kind which have just now perhaps the greatest interest, and which are among the latest novelties, in this way, are paper "blankets."

Attention has frequently been called to the value of ordinary sheets of paper as a substitute for bedclothes, or, at least, as an addition to bed-

clothes. The idea seems to have suggested the fabrication of "blankets" from this cheap material. The fact that they are not as durable as the genuine article is in their favour, as, in the case of the very poor, where the same bedding is used for years, a very cheap material that will last only a comparatively short time must be better than durable articles that are rarely or never washed.

## THE SULTAN'S BOAT.

THE Sultan's boat, or caïque, is white, lined with red velvet and gold, and has a gold canopy. The cushions are embroidered in gold and precious stones, and facing those on which the sultan sits kneel two of his chief ministers, their heads bowed down and their arms folded in the most abject manner. The twenty-four oarsmen are dressed in very full white shirts and trousers, purple and gold jackets, and scarlet fezzes. Prior to every stroke they kneel down and touch the bottom of the boat with their foreheads, then rise to a standing posture, and send the oars with a tremendous sweep. The pace is terrific—they beat easily the fastest steam launch; and the exertion is equally so, as the rowers generally break down at the end of two years. When the sultan lands he walks on a red carpet kept down with little brass weights. He passes between two rows of pashas, who bend nearly double. The Sultan is very fond of peacocks, and has hundreds swarming about the place.

## RAISING POULTRY.

It is strange that so few of our countrywomen turn their attention to poultry raising. It is a health-giving occupation, and the average woman has a nature well fitted to care for the little peeping chicks. A woman is all patience, sympathy, and love, qualities that will insure success in the poultry fancy. Out in the air at early morn will soon bring to the snowy cheek a healthy glow. How it will send the blood leaping through your veins! If you cannot keep poultry, you can keep birds, and when the burden of life's care seems almost to crush you, how their sweet songs will cheer up the aching heart and tired body. If you fill your house with pets, it will fill your hearts with love for all of His helpless creatures.

## COOLNESS IN ACTION.

If the superior officer lose his courage it is all over with the men. An anecdote is related of a staff officer who produced an excellent effect upon a whole column of men under fire by carrying an order quietly through at hot bombardment with a cigar between his lips. And a similar story is told of an officer in one of the battles before Metz. His men were suffering horribly, and he was unable to steady them until he saw a soldier smoking. He was struck by the effect produced on his own mind, and he was wise enough to walk up to the man and ask if he would give him a light for his cigar. Courage is infectious as fear.

## INSTINCT OF ANIMALS.

MUCH is said and written, nowadays, about the reasoning power of animals. But did you ever hear of a leech reasoning? Says a medical man: "I had occasion lately to keep some leeches and water beetles; they were put into round open glass vessels, about six inches high, and about two-thirds full of water. A medical leech which was put into one of these vessels got out, and within an hour after it was



found on the table, and replaced in the water. Now, although the vessel was left uncovered as before, this leech never again tried to get out. A horse-leech and two water beetles treated in the same way did the same thing once, and once only; each preferred the water to the dry table, and on being replaced they never tried to get out again; therefore they had been taught by experience. Is this not a high order of intelligence?"

#### THE PEOPLE'S CO-OPERATIVE STORES AND GENERAL AID SOCIETY.

We notice with pleasure the formation of a co-operative stores for the people. The society have taken the oldest co-operative society in England (the Rochdale Pioneers) as their working model. The so-called co-operative stores at the West End are not co-operative, and practically exclude the workman and clerk from their benefits.

As the business develops the benefits will be extended and assume a varied form, and it is proposed to establish Sick, Benevolent, and Burial Funds, also a Provident Dispensary and Savings' Bank. Experience has proved that provision of this nature is a great benefit to the artisan classes. Their several well-managed friendly societies with large capital show the use of such provision, and the way in which it is appreciated. Yet it is an indisputable fact that thousands employed in offices and other non-mechanical occupations, whose wages are lower than the artisan classes, have not these required aids; and to provide such will be one of the objects of "The People's Co-operative Stores."

One of the chief benefits of true co-operation is the teaching and practising habits of thrift, and it is therefore considered most desirable that those participating in the benefits of the Stores should become shareholders, for which purpose a simple Ticket-holder will be required to leave with the Company the first 20s. of profit to which he becomes entitled for the purpose of purchasing one share.

There is a great lack in benevolent machinery in reaching those who are in temporary want from sickness, slackness of work, or other causes. It is often felt that money given in such cases is not always applied to the relief designed, and soup-kitchens and bread relief have been shown from practical experience not to meet the wants of the respectable poor; to this kind of assistance they have a strong repugnance, as they feel that it classes them with the tramp and professional beggar. The deposit system which will be worked in this society will meet the desire of the benevolent and the wants of the recipient.

It is proposed to receive deposits from five shillings and upwards; books of tickets will be sold representing payments of sixpence and one shilling each. These can be easily carried in the pocket and be given in deserving cases in lieu of cash, so that the various small wants of a poor person or family would be supplied at the stores on presentation of one of these tickets, without it being known that they were objects of charity, but the bonuses on the goods so bought will be paid to the purchaser of the book.

Whilst shareholders will have the prospect of a fair dividend on their investments, they will also be developing amongst the working classes those sound principles of co-operation which have proved so beneficial to all those who have adopted them, and we hope that rich and poor alike will support this philanthropic movement. All information can be obtained from the Secretary, 2A, West Street, Finsbury Circus, E.C.

At a meeting of the Volunteer commanding officers at the offices of the National Rifle Association, a resolution was passed to the effect that Hyde Park is the only available site for the proposed review.

## CECIL'S FORTUNE.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### HIS WIFE.

It was surely monstrous that Lady Kate, she whose white arms had been twined round Cecil's neck, she whose red lips had met his own in the passionate kisses of a burning love; she who had promised never to leave him till death should part them twain, who were, in the language of the Holy Writ, to become "one flesh," it was surely monstrous that Lady Kate did not answer the letter of Cecil Renfrew—did not give him some sign that she still loved him, that all her promises were not mere empty words, but the outspoken feelings of her impassioned soul as he in his love madness, for so it seemed to him now, had believed them to be. No answer? All night long he paced his chamber like a caged lion, and then there stole in at his window a faint, weird grey light—morning was breaking. He looked at his watch and found it was only three o'clock.

"Kate is sleeping," he said to himself, bitterly. "She can afford to laugh at my misery. This is to be her wedding day; she has only mocked me. She is a cruel and pitiless and wicked coquette, more remorseless, more ruthless than a tigress who tears her victims to shreds, for the soul is capable of more acute anguish than is the body, and she has torn, as it were, my very heart out and is trampling on it—trampling on my life, on the hopes of my future; she has blighted my whole existence. Henceforth I will be an outcast from among my civilised fellows—I will go and live among naked savages under burning suns. I will forget this old world refinement and civilisation amid which I was born. I will henceforth hate all women, spurn them, scorn them, for since she who wore the garb of an angel of light is but a cruel heathen deity in disguise, then must all women be likewise false and cruel."

And then all at once poor Cecil remembered his mother, his gentle, saint-like-looking, patient mother, whose whole life had been one self-sacrifice to her unworthy husband and her adored child, and it seemed that in the twilight of the dawn her pitying eyes were looking at him fondly through tears.

"No, women are not all bad," he said, after a pause; "but Kate Ormond is a woman of the upper classes, reared in the selfishness of a pampered luxury; such a school is the worst that a human soul can grow in, for there it is taught to seek ever new excitements and distractions. I have heard of some of these women of the upper classes who possessed great fascination of manner or great wit, or great beauty, counting their conquests over men's lives and happiness, as the wild Indian counts the foes he has slain in battle by his grim chain of scalps. I have read of a pretty, vain countess who boasted that she had caused the deaths of six men under the age of twenty-six—one had blown out his brains when she laughed in his face, and told him that she had been fooling him; three others perished in France and Austria in duels for her sake; two were drowned on their way out to Australia, where they were going driven from their native land by the haunting memories of her false promises and heartless mockeries. This girl, Kate Ormond, to whom I have given my foolish heart and my mad love, must be just such another woman as this fashionable countess of whom I read. But she shall not triumph completely: as she passes down the stairs in her bridal garb, I will come before her and upbraid her with her falsehood. I will tell her gay bridegroom that her lips have met mine in mad kisses under tall, tossing trees in far distant woods; that when no other eyes saw us I have held her to my heart in such a love clasp as only he has a right to give who is about to claim his beloved as his wedded wife. Yes, they may scourge me as a madman if they will, but I will tell them all, her haughty parents, her insolent bridegroom, her flattering menials, that she is no true wife for an honest man, albeit that I have hitherto held her sacred; destined to be the

wife of my bosom, the mother of my children."

And then a grey light flashed into Cecil's eyes, the noise of a hundred bells was in his ears, making a fearful clamour, and he sank upon the bed near which he stood in a species of stupor, from which he gradually drifted off into a deep, calm sleep that lasted for hours.

When he awoke the sun was shining brilliantly into his room and there were sounds of marriage bells in the air. He started up and looked at his watch.

"Half-past ten! Lady Kate was to be married at half-past ten; that is the time fixed for the ceremony to take place, then am I too late?"

He spoke aloud, and he glanced into the large mirror that stood on his dressing-table. He saw a tall young man, with a white, haggard face, wild, dark eyes, and disordered hair, rough, short, curly, but not unpicturesque. A head powerful and grand in its youth and its misery and intellect; the head of an angry and youthful Greek god a sculptor might have deemed it. Don't however, imagine that Cecil Renfrew admired himself in the very least when he caught sight of himself in the glass. No, he only smiled grimly as he put a light cap on his head and he said aloud:

"I look like a murderer in a melo-drama—and I feel like one."

Then he ran down the grand gilded staircase and out into the street. As he passed through the hall he saw that the marble floor was strewn with freshly gathered flowers, and that the doors were open, and men and maids stood waiting—waiting for what?—for the bridal party to return?

On the steps in front was placed a gay carpet, and already gathered upon the pavement was a motley crowd. He ran on like one in a dream. The summer sun shone brightly, and in his ears rang the merry wedding peals. Then had the words been spoken which made Kate Ormond and the French marquis man and wife, or is there yet time to upbraid her and to warn her bridegroom that she whom he has made his bride is perjured and false?

Will he have the heart to do this? After all is the madness of jealousy still upon him? Have his sufferings and the cruelty of Kate made him cruel also? He went on straight until he came to the church—the fashionable church. The ways were thronged with splendid carriages. Servants wearing white rosettes lounged about. The horses' heads were decked with flowers.

Are they coming?—oh, yes. Some of the bystanders clapped their hands and called out hurrah as the bridegroom and the bride passed down the aisle, for Cecil had entered the church, had passed under the porch, and now—now he saw her approaching him—Kate, who was to have been his bride by that day—his bride, his own.

She wore glistening robes of ivory-coloured satin, and upon her neck and arms, and in her ears glittered diamonds that an empress might have envied. Kate, Marchioness of St. Germaine, the beauty of the season, the rage of society; Kate, the coquette, who was trampling with cruel, silken-shod feet on Cecil Renfrew's heart.

He started forward and stood before her and looked her in the face. His lips moved, but he could not speak. A spell seemed cast over him—a doubt of the reality of the scene that was being enacted before him took possession of him.

Was he mad, or dreaming, or both? And Kate—what of Kate, with her delicate loveliness, and her bride's dress and her jewels? She looked at him, and she smiled the bitterest smile that ever made human lips awful either with sorrow or scorn, and she hissed one word between her teeth—traitor. Then she reeled and would have fallen, but that Cecil intercepted the bridegroom and caught her in his arms. Then she opened her eyes and looked at him tenderly, and her lips moved.

As the wolf listens for the steps of his prey, so Cecil listened for the words that Kate spoke, and they were these:

"You have broken my heart. Are you come to triumph over the wreck that you have made?"

He answered her only with his eyes—eyes in which burnt the flame of his devouring love. His nostrils dilated; his teeth were clenched. There was something terrible and yet majestic in the dark, powerful, handsome young face—something grand, in spite of the anguish and the unspoken wrath and the wild surprise, for Cecil had made up his mind that Lady Kate was but a heartless coquette triumphing over his distress.

Only yesterday in the Row had she not passed on horseback, and refused to look at him, and now she lay in his arms in that most fashionable of London churches where she had just become the bride of another man.

Around her stood ladies of the first aristocracy, attired as the patrician daughters of fashion are attired when one of their order is joined in holy wedlock to a bridegroom of rank. Close to her stood the newly-made husband. His blonde style of manly beauty formed a strong contrast to the sombre, stern, grand Renfrew, with his bronze pallor and his eyes sad and dark as night.

Besides all this, the bridegroom wore the most fashionable dress, and was in the language of Shakespeare "scented like a milliner," while Renfrew's attire was disordered; his hair was rough; his face haggard. All this takes some time to describe, but in real truth it was the work of a few seconds.

Before the guests could speak; before even the bridegroom could take his bride out of the encircling arms of Cecil, Kate, Marchioness of St. Germaine, had recovered her senses. White as death, white to the lips, she yet contrived to smile.

The story of the Spartan boy who suffered the fox to tear out his heart rather than betray that he had it concealed under his robe may be an exaggeration or a myth, but nevertheless the requirements of society demand that many of us should learn to smile and chatter while our hearts are breaking, and does not the soul suffer more keenly than the body?

Lady Kate Ormond would not have been the daughter of the Countess of Belgrave if she had not known how to "act" in such a crisis, and now that she had recovered her senses she recovered her self-possession, even her composure—nay, the semblance of her cheerfulness.

Lifting herself out of the arms of the secretary—those arms in which she would she felt at that moment have gladly nestled whenever in all her life to come she should need a haven and a sheltering, resting place—lifting herself out of Cecil's arms she stood erect. She smiled; she bowed; she thanked him with the most enchanting grace, with the most perfect sang froid, with a winning smile.

All the bystanders, some of whom may for a moment have thought the incident peculiar and even suspicious—all the bystanders were in a moment perfectly satisfied that Lady Kate had swooned through the heat of the weather and the excitement of the occasion, and that the dark young man who had started forward and caught her in his arms was merely a stranger whom curiosity had induced to enter the church and gaze upon the beauty of the bride.

All the bystanders save one, the bridegroom, he had heard Kate whisper, though the words she had spoken were inaudible to him, and he felt convinced of the truth that his bride loved the secretary, and that the secretary loved his bride.

The marquise coolly made up his mind to work steadily until he had achieved Cecil's ruin and death.

"Nothing will be easier to me," said the marquise to himself; "but first of all my pretty wife must be taught to love me. She is the first woman whom I have not succeeded in making an impression upon. Her heart is as cold towards me as if it were made of stone. Well, it must yield if I have to break it."

But the French marquise was a greater diplomatist than was his newly-made wife. He, too, smiled, bowed and thanked Mr. Renfrew, calling him by his name, and then the wedding guests passed out of the church and were driven away in their carriages, and the mere spectators began to comment on the beauty of the bride, the grace of the young bridesmaids, the splendour of the wedding dresses, the lustre of the ladies' diamonds, the stately grandeur and lordly style of the noble marquise, and the bells rang, and soon the church was empty, and Cecil Renfrew, as he walked along the streets, asked himself if he was going mad?

Kate, Marchioness of St. Germaine—marquise, as in France her title would be written and spoken—Kate has left the gay guests at the magnificent wedding breakfast. She is in her own room, and Miss Pomfret her maid is dressing her for her journey. It is warm weather, and the young marchioness wears a travelling dress of some shining fabric thinner than silk. The colour is silver-grey. It is exquisitely trimmed with a kind of silvery lacework, and the bride wears a scarf of the same material trimmed in the same fashion, fastened by a great precious ruby in the form of a heart set round with purest pearls, rather an antique ornament, but exquisitely made and of the rarest beauty. Lady Kate wore a hat of silver-grey satin with a ruby-coloured feather.

"Your attire is now perfect, your ladyship," said Pomfret.

Lady Kate was not pale. A lovely bloom was on her cheeks, and her blue eyes shone. She had contrived to eat and drink at the wedding feast, and to laugh and appear merry, but there was nevertheless a certain gleam in the eyes, a restlessness and smothered fire which made Miss Pomfret very uneasy.

Did Lady St. Germaine trust her or suspect her? Not one word had she told Pomfret of the meeting in the church, though some of the servants who were there present had seen it all and had told her of it.

"You will now forget the young man who has caused you so much sorrow, my lady, that is if you are wise," said Pomfret.

"But if I am not wise?" Lady Kate answered, with a little hollow laugh.

"But now you will be wise, will you not?" Pomfret pursued, with a smile.

"I shall do my duty," Lady Kate answered, "in that station in life in which it has pleased Heaven to place me."

"Why, that's out of the catechism," said Pomfret, with a sneer.

"It is a noble rule of duty," said the young wife.

Pomfret bit her lip. What if the innate goodness and nobility of Kate's soul proved too grand and strong for her, and all the temptations which she had it in her wicked heart to throw in the way of the young wife!

"If she never brings disgrace upon herself, then will I bring it upon her," said the young tirewoman to herself.

The carriage was announced, and then the bride had to go through a series of leave-takings that a little tried her patience and her nerves. Her parents were profuse in their affectionate expressions. Lady Kate embraced them both warmly. Showers of rice and many old slippers were thrown after the carriage containing the happy pair as they drove to the station. Miss Pomfret sat behind with the French valet of the marquise, and thus the party reached the station.

A few hours have passed. It is night. The young marchioness and her husband are seated in a first-class compartment of a carriage on a foreign line of railway. They are rushing towards Paris. It is a glorious summer night, and the moon is shining on a not very picturesque country, for the bridal pair crossed by the short sea route, and the landscape beyond Calais is not fine.

Lady Kate was looking with wistful, melan-

choly eyes at the moon sailing in the blue heavens. Her husband watched her from his corner, but she thought that he was asleep. All at once he startled her by saying:

"Are you very sorry that you have married me, my love?"

She started, and then she said slowly:

"I mean to make you a good wife, Henri."

"That is no answer," said the marquise, "and I repeat my question. Are you sorry, my love, that you have married me?"

"It is a strange question," said the young wife. "If you thought that I was going to be sorry why then did you marry me?"

"Ah," said the marquise, shrugging his shoulders, "I did not exactly think that, you may be sure. Shall I tell you, my dear little wife, what I thought up to yesterday on this momentous subject, and—what I think now?"

The Marchioness Kate felt her face glow with a crimson flush, but the marquise could not see that by the faint moonlight.

"Tell me then," she said, calmly, "if you like."

"Your sang froid does you honour," the marquise answered.

He paused a moment, then he said:

"I never thought you loved me. I even felt that there had been a rival, but I thought I might venture to despise him, for I said to myself if she marries me because I am rich, and leaves the lover, then she does not love the lover with a love that I need be jealous of, or that is worth anything at all, and if she is as affectionate as I think she is, I will make her love me in less than three months' time."

Kate, who knew that she would never have married the marquise if Cecil had been true to her, trembled and looked down.

"But yesterday," continued the marquise, "when your lover stepped before you in the church and glared at you like a maniac, and you gave him—ah, such a look, and dropped into his arms in the sight of all the world, I said to myself: 'Henri, my fine fellow, you have made a great mistake; you have married a woman who loves very truly another man, and who will bring shame on the unsullied lilies of the house of St. Germaine.'"

Kate turned and faced him, and left off looking at the summer night sky which appeared hitherto to have absorbed her attention.

"Never, my lord marquise," she said, solemnly. "I have been called madcap Kate, but shame and I can have nothing in common. I tell you that with Heaven's help I mean to be your true and faithful wife!"

"Ah, that is all very fine," the marquise answered. "I wish I could believe you, but it is difficult, Kate, and with all your protestations you still have not answered my question. 'Are you sorry that you have married me?'"

"No," Kate answered, slowly, "because now I have an object in life, the doing of my duty as a wife to a husband who is clever, handsome, well-bred, and who loves me truly."

"Then," said the marquise, "am I to understand that if the dark young gentleman with the wild eyes into whose arms you dropped in so picturesque a fashion this morning had condescended to love you truly that you would not have married me?"

"Henri," Kate answered, "Heaven is my witness that I have always said to myself that whenever I married I intended to be the very best of wives. I would not have married you believing that another man was worthier. I do not believe that now; I will tell you more in three months from this time. Answer me, did you not say just now that in three months you would win my love?"

"And so I will," the marquise said, coolly, "if that other man is not in the way; but if he is, Kate, beware. I am not at all a violent man, but I am a determined one, and I have no pity when I once hate man or woman!"

Oh, how slowly, how coldly he spoke. Kate shuddered. Her young blood ran cold. An awful foreboding, an unutterable dread took possession of her. This man whom she had married she did not hate; on the contrary, she acknowledged a species of mysterious power in him



which if fully exercised would bend her to his will in soul and in heart even as the willow branches bend to the mighty power of the wind—the wandering wind in a storm.

## CHAPTER XX.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

Is this the ghost of a faded past?  
The shadow of a love which did not last?  
And over all my life a shadow cast?

THE Marquis of St. Germaine thought his wife one of the prettiest women he had ever seen: he admired her style. If he had been talking confidentially of her to one of his blasé, world-hardened aristocratic friends he would have said that, as far as he could tell, the beauty of Kate Ormond was of the kind likely to last; always supposing she had a world of happy days, proper sleep, exercise, and dainty fare—all these things the polished Frenchman knew were indispensable to the preservation of female loveliness.

"She will never broaden or rodden, nor will she, on the other hand, be sallow and scraggy as she grows older," said the marquis to himself. "And I must think of my future duchess when she is forty-eight or so, I should like her complexion to remain what it is, and her figure also if possible. I think one may safely predict it of Kate that she will be a charming, enchanting woman even in her declining years."

The marquis was as much in love with his pretty, fair bride as he had ever been with any woman up to this period of his life, and he was quite determined to make her love him in return. He had never failed yet in winning the love of any woman that he had desired to win.

Why, then, should he fail now? But the lover must be got rid of completely, and the marchioness must learn to despise him, also she must tell her husband the whole truth respecting Cecil Renfrew. He was quite determined about that.

"You love this man, Kate—this secretary of the earl's—confess it."

"No," Kate answered, "I think he is false and paltry, I do not love him."

Kate spoke with a certain candour which quite convinced the marquis that at least she believed that she was telling the truth.

"Come and sit by my side, then, Kate," he said, "rest your head upon my shoulder as a wife should, and let me look into your eyes and find out if you are telling me the truth."

She arose and sat by him, she felt his arm encircle her waist, and she did not shrink.

"I am his wife," she said to her young and noble heart, "his wife, and, please Heaven, I will be faithful to him."

After all, it was one of those marriages which could have led to a life of domestic peace and conjugal contentment, that might have taken the place of the impassioned raptures and romantic adoration which the young marchioness now thought of as an impossible ideal, had other persons chosen to let the wedded pair alone to shape their lives for themselves, but other people were set upon causing the ruin of Kate Ormond—crafty minds plotted a diabolical plot, wicked hearts were brooding over a deadly wrong of days long, long before the innocent young marchioness saw the light.

Death and destruction were spread for the lovely creature as nets are set in the depth of the summer woods to ensnare the sweet and innocent birds; and Kate walked on blindly towards her fate: even as one who walks in her sleep walks on towards the ghastly precipice which is yawning for her close at hand, she approaches it, she draws nearer, she stands on the edge, another step forward and she will be hurled to a horrible death, unless some strong human hand is stretched out to save her.

A few weeks spent in Paris and then the bridal pair had journeyed on into the heart of Switzerland. The marquis was sufficiently in love to desire to be as much alone as possible with his beautiful wife—he did not sigh after billiards or cards or horseracing; he did not crave dinners, balls, or even operas or theatres.

The weather was what he called detestably hot, thus he sought the shade of deep forests, the breezy slopes of mountains, and cool, delightful bathing in deep, glassy lakes; he found all these in Switzerland. There was an antique chateau to let in a secluded village—which we will call Altendorf—situated in the French speaking portion of Switzerland, and hearing of this chateau the marquis, who was now at Geneva with his wife, resolved to go and see it, and if he liked it and Kate liked it, he determined that they would spend the months of August and September there.

Kate had, in truth, thrown herself heart and soul into the idea of this secluded country life in an exquisitely beautiful foreign country. She was to boat and drive and ride with her kind, attentive, handsome lord; he was clever, he knew so much of the world; if he had not read much himself he had conversed so frequently with those who had that his mind was well stored with pleasant, piquant, historical anecdotes.

On his part he found Kate charming, frank, if not quite so happy as he would have liked to have seen her, for her disappointed love for Cecil had cast a deep gloom over her life; she was yet cheerful, content, and if not passionately fond of her husband, still affectionate, gentle, and yielding as the most exacting husband could desire, and the marquis was satisfied; his temperament was not a passionate one; a wife too demonstrative and impassioned would have wearied him and jarred upon his fastidious taste.

In short, the marquis and his lovely bride might almost have been described during these first days that followed their wedding as a sort of elegant, handsome, and magnificent "Darby and Joan couple," and then came a disturbance in the placid waters of the river of their lives.

The Chateau Bronté was a huge old house, standing on the skirts of a forest as one dreams of when reading such weird and witching legends of the Middle Ages, when knights rode out on their good steeds single-handed to do the bidding of their lady-loves; when witches rode high in the air and brewed the storms that were to wreck ships and cast drowned men on the sullen shores of tempestuous oceans; when ladies sat in their bowers surrounded by their maidens some sweet-voiced troubadour sang to them songs of the gallant knights who were fighting in Palestine.

Chateau Bronté was quite old enough to have witnessed all those scenes; it was a noble old place. The present owner, the Count Bronté, was travelling in the United States; when he returned he intended to spend his winters in Rome, his summers in England, his autumns in Spain, and he wished to let the chateau for as long a term as he possibly could.

The Marquis de St. Germaine took it from the count's agent at Geneva for two months, and one hot afternoon in August Kate arrived with her husband at the venerable chateau. She sprang lightly out of the carriage and expressed her delight with everything she saw.

"It is lovely," she said, "it is like a picture. Oh! Henri, I will go into the woods with my sketching materials—I will make a glorious picture of this old house, and it shall be exhibited at next year's Academy."

"You shall do us you like, my love," the marquis answered, with a smile. "For my part, I am rejoiced that we have found so cool a retreat—the shadow of the great mountain falls on the back of the chateau, while in front the flower-garden actually leads into the forest; to the right we have the village and the lake—it is like a scene in a pantomime."

"But it is real," cried Kate. "The trees give real shade, the flowers on the lawn have a

delicious fragrance, the waters of the lake are delightful as a bath, and the old house itself must be full of curiosities and valuable, ancient furniture. I am delighted that you have engaged a staff of Swiss servants, one can forget all about London and the English if one likes in this abode."

As she spoke she saw the tall, slight form of Miss Pomfret approaching her from the wide stone steps that led up to the terrace of the chateau. How was it that a shudder ran through her whole frame? For a moment she felt ill and faint, almost as if she were dying. Involuntarily she stretched out her hands towards her husband, but he was not looking at her. He was quite unconscious that she felt suddenly ill and nervous. He held something in his hand. What was it? A book or a picture, or was it a letter? Anyhow it seemed to absorb his whole attention, for his eyes were riveted upon it.

A sudden spasm of something like anger at this seeming neglect seized Kate's soul. It was one of those unfortunate moments when two human creatures, unhappy and blind as we often are, make the first false step that leads to our destruction. Kate, turning away with a wounded and swelling heart from the husband whom she was beginning almost to love, found Pomfret standing close to her, looking straight into her face with her cunning, cruel eyes.

"I am faint and ill; call the marquis," she said, impetuously.

"Sit down in this arbour, my lady," Pomfret said, pointing to one close by, "and I will bring you some wine. You must not allow yourself to become nervous and irritable."

"Tell my husband," Kate repeated, in a peremptory manner, "that I am ill."

"Husbands, dear Lady Kate," answered Pomfret, with a wicked smile, "do not like sick wives. The marquis has never seen other than your bright and sunny side. Do not let him contrast an ailing lady with, say, some bold jade all health and spirits and pink cheeks and black eyes. Faugh! for my own part I wish that all the men in the world could be sunk into the bottom of the sea. They are such a faithless lot."

It seemed to Kate as if the words of Pomfret were as boiling lead poured into an open wound. Suddenly an angry jealousy of she knew not what sprang into her heart. She was too proud to question Pomfret, whose sinister looks and mocking smile conveyed so much; but she felt convinced that her husband was playing her false, and that Pomfret knew it.

"Bring me something; some water or wine, or—something," she said, in a tone somewhat haughty, for instinct whispered to her that Pomfret rejoiced in her misery, though she was at a loss to understand why.

In a little while Pomfret returned with a glass of wine in her hand. Provisions had been sent on to Chateau Bronté several days before, and a staff of Swiss servants were employed in making the huge old house as home-like as possible. Kate drank the wine slowly. All the while she was watching her husband, who had wandered absently towards the gate at the end of the flowered lawn, and he was either reading a letter or looking at a photograph. Either surmise was sufficient to fill the soul of Kate, who was highly imaginative and sensitive to a degree, with a vague uneasiness amounting to something akin to jealousy, or rather a burning sense of wrong.

"What is the marquis reading, Pomfret?" she suddenly asked.

"A letter which came by post this morning. There was a photograph in it, for I saw him take it out when he tore open the envelope," replied the maid.

"And he has taken both letter and photograph away to examine before we enter our new home, although he knows I am not well, and that I have been travelling for some hours," said Kate.

"It is not a pleasant beginning, certainly," Pomfret answered, drily.

Her eyes shone with triumph; indeed, the evil gleam in them was so joyous that it struck



[THE HAPPY PAIR.]

even the poor young marchioness as something cruel, and Kate said, impulsively:

"You seem delighted that I am miserable. I believe, for some reason or other, you hate me in your heart, Pomfret, though Heaven knows I am quite unconscious of ever having done you any wrong."

The young marchioness did not see Pomfret's face, for the tirewoman had turned aside. Had she seen it she might almost have fancied that it had become possessed by a demon. The teeth were set, the lips were drawn in a savage grin; the very complexion had altered from its usual brunette tinge to a dark and cadaverous tint. Pomfret unclenched her teeth and whispered to herself:

"For some reason or other I hate you in my heart, do I, my fine lady? Ah, and one day, sooner or later, you shall learn what that secret is—learn it to your cost."

Then Pomfret turned round a meek, modest, gentle face upon the distressed young lady, and said:

"I am so sorry, my dear mistress, that you will take such ideas into your head. It is only because you are not quite well just now. If I did not know and feel that I should indeed be truly wretched; but you are nervous. Come into the house and let me assist you to dress for dinner. I hope the cook, who is said to be a splendid chef, has acquitted himself well, and prepared such a repast as you will like. You must feel starved."

"I do, I—I have no appetite at all," Kate said, wearily. "I feel as if eating were the hardest work."

She still looked towards the gate through which her husband had passed out of her sight carrying the mysterious letter and photograph, but she nevertheless suffered Pomfret to lead her up the wide stone steps to the terrace, and to introduce her to the magnificent old castle, for such it was in reality.

Kate had a veneration for old mansions. She was soon interested in the huge dining-hall, with its great windows of stained glass, its suits

of armour, its grim array of family portraits. As for the furniture of Chateau Bronté, it was ancient enough to delight the antiquarian, high-backed chairs, worked in wool and silk flowers, two centuries old, moth-eaten tapestries, bedsteads of carved wood, inlaid with ivory, large enough to accommodate half a dozen sleepers; cabinets of inlaid wood so old that the date of their make was in some instances lost, old china and bronze and marble statuettes lurked in every corner; weird old portraits leered down from unexpected places.

"It is a ghostly old house," said Kate, with a half smile and a half sigh to Pomfret. "Still, two people who loved each other might be happy here."

"Yes, love is a great magician," was the wise answer of that peculiar young person—Miss Pomfret.

And then she led the marchioness, or the marquise as the title is pronounced abroad, into the suite of rooms that were appointed for her and her husband. They were stately, grand rooms, furnished in the same stiff and stately fashion as the other apartments, but the marquise had sent on all kinds of pretty modern luxuries from Geneva.

The first room was the sleeping chamber of Kate: the bed was hung with curtains of rose-coloured satin, embroidered in gold, the satin was faded and the gold was tarnished, but there was a luxurious modern couch covered with lively cretonne, placed in the recess of a window which opened on a balcony filled with fragrant and beautiful flowers. Kate sat upon a low seat and Pomfret brushed out her long hair.

"Make haste," said Kate, wearily; "fasten it up anyhow, and I don't care what I wear."

Lady Kate was looking paler than Pomfret had ever seen her look.

"Wear the pale green satin," said the maid, "and the silver necklet."

"Anything you like," the young lady answered, with a faint smile.

So Pomfret dressed her in the colour most un-

becoming to her strange pallor, and she descended to the little dining-room, where an elegant repast, two liveried servants, and many wax candles and flowers gave colour and effect to the scene. It was full five minutes before the marquise entered; when he did he looked abstracted and soon after the dinner began he said suddenly:

"What an ugly dress, Kate," for the servants did not understand English.

The young wife answered not, but it seemed to her as if the first shot had been fired in a certain battle of everyday life that is often fought out daily upon our hearthstones, the discord that comes to make of married life a Tophet instead of a Paradise. It was the first unkind word he had spoken since their explanations in the railway carriage, and somehow it seemed to sink into her heart like a leaden bullet. Unhappy pair, unseen human forces were at work striving to do them evil. Kate had really no appetite, she took a little fruit and then said she would go to her room.

"It is only eight o'clock," said Henri, with a short laugh, "but you are not this evening a lively companion, Kate. I shall stroll on the terrace with my cigar."

Lady Kate did not answer, she went out, and as there were lights all the way up the wide staircase, and her room was on the first landing, she soon found her way to it. She passed through it into the room beyond, an elegantly-fitted up little sitting-room, but the walls were hung with tapestry, there were lights, and there was a table strewn with the newest London magazines; also there was a piano which the marquise had had sent on from Geneva. Lady Kate sat down and began to play a sweet, mournful love song, and then she sang—her voice was true, pure, and well cultivated, she ceased to sing, then the tapestry was moved aside and there strode forward, pale, haggard, shabbily clad, wild-eyed—but, oh, how noble looking—none other than Cecil Renfrew!

(To be Continued.)





[THE FRIENDS.]

## CISSY: A STORY OF A GIRL.

(A COMPLETE TALE.)

### CHAPTER I.

CASTERHAM—in the south-west of sunny England, a dreamy old cathedral tower situated in the midst of a fair, fertile country, so surrounded by grand old woods, that from a distance the spire of St. Cuthbert's Cathedral seemed

Bosom'd high in tufted trees

—a town just large enough to consider itself of immense importance, and just small enough to enable everybody to become perfectly well informed as to the affairs of their neighbours.

"L'état, c'est moi!" said the self-idolatrous French monarch.

I venture to assert that if the good people of Casterham were asked to give a free translation of the sentence, applying it to themselves, they would render it thus:

"The town of Casterham, that is, the cathedral, the cathedral close, and all the ecclesiastical functionaries."

Yes, a "clergyocracy" reigned supreme—doctors, lawyers, country gentry, were thrown into the shade—were considered, and felt themselves to be, nowhere in comparison with a dignitary of the Church. The very vergers had a sort of ecclesiastical lustre shed over them, and comforted themselves accordingly with an air of becoming dignity and mystery. In fine, to be of any importance in Casterham it was necessary to be in some way connected with the cathedral.

To our weak and finite human understanding the loaves and fishes would seem to have been very unequally distributed in Casterham, for when the Christian, talented George Emerson,

canon of St. Cuthbert's Cathedral, died suddenly eighteen years before our story commences, leaving a girl-wife and a year-old baby daughter to fight the hard battle of life alone, without the help of that strong masculine sense, without which no woman, be she ever so self-reliant, can wholly do without—when the funeral was over, and the sight of her child sent a gleam of hope through the poor stunned brain of the mother, she roused herself and bravely faced the appalling truth—doubly appalling for the sake of the babe—that she had not a penny in the world!

But an heroic spirit lurked in that frail, childish-looking frame. Jane Emerson knew what it was to have worked for her daily bread when she was a poor governess, before the three happy years which she had spent with her dear husband: so she took a small house in Casterham, succeeded in establishing a school—a very preparatory one it must be owned—and thus by unwearying industry endeavoured to support herself and her child, and to educate the latter as well as lay in her power.

And so the time wore on until Cissy Emerson was nineteen, a tall, graceful, creamy-complexioned girl, with her father's deep, honest grey eyes and waving brown hair. Fairly educated, but not a proficient in any branch of her studies, a deficiency not owing to any lack of talent on her part, but first and principally to want of means to procure the necessary instruction, and secondly to her mother's old-world notions concerning female education.

"I cannot see the use of women learning mathematics and filling their heads with such new-fangled ideas," Jane would say. "It wasn't the fashion in my day, and I don't see that women have improved since. Cissy shall have nothing to do with such nonsense, I'll take care of that."

The latter precaution seemed unnecessary, for Cissy did not seem to give the matter a thought. She pursued the even tenor of her life, initiating little, shabby fat fingers into the mysteries of the scales of the pianoforte, or patiently trying

to instil the multiplication table into some little curly-headed urchin's merry mind. Unwearyingly and conscientiously she and her mother strove to fulfil their thankless task of teaching, yet, notwithstanding all their efforts, the school was fast diminishing, and one afternoon the sad truth dawned upon mother and daughter that the pay received for their pupils was no longer adequate to support them.

"What shall we do—what shall we do, mother?" said Cissy, despairingly.

"Trust in the good Lord who has hitherto helped us," replied her mother, with a forced calmness, her heart wrung at beholding the shadow upon Cissy's fair young face.

"Pupils have been becoming fewer and fewer for the last two years. I wonder what is the cause of it. Surely it is not that we do not take pains enough with them."

The mother sighed as she answered:

"Yes, I can conscientiously say that we have done our duty by our pupils, but, Cissy—and she hesitated.

"What is it, mother?"

"I fear that we—you and I—are too old-fashioned in our manner of teaching. I have been thinking for some time that we must try some other means of subsistence."

Cissy flushed. She had all the instincts of her class, and no other means of livelihood presented itself as being possible for a gentlewoman to pursue.

"What could we do, mother? In what way can a lady earn her living except by teaching?"

"No honest work is beneath any lady," said Jane, resolutely, although in her heart and from her training and associations she thought with Cissy.

Many a night during the past dreary winter had she lain awake, her busy little mind pondering over ways and means. She well knew that to engage in business of any kind would utterly ruin their social standing in Casterham. These things are thought very much more of in a provincial town than in a larger place where one

may pass muster, and Cissy was proud—Jane knew that well—prouder than she was. But then Cissy must be comfortably fed and clothed, and the school was not paying, so practical, energetic Jane decided that there was no alternative but to turn their attention to something else.

Cissy was standing by the window during the conversation, gazing vacantly down the dusty, glaring street; she was turning wearily away when a figure caught her eye, the figure of a gentleman walking slowly down the street, looking at the doors as he passed and evidently seeking for someone in particular.

"There's some strange clergyman, mother," said she, her youthful, feminine curiosity excited. "I wonder who he is? Oh! mother, he is coming here."

A knock at the street-door corroborated her statement, and in a few minutes more the servant announced the Rev. Gerald Osbrey. The new-comer was tall, very tall, a goodly portion of his person consisting of two long legs. His face was plain, very plain and large-featured, with small, quick gray eyes; and his hair was sandyish, almost inclining to red. He briefly stated the object of his visit, i.e., that having been appointed to a curacy in Casterham a clerical friend of his, who was also a friend of Jane's, residing in London had asked him to call upon her at his earliest convenience.

The conversation, as might be expected between total strangers, was chiefly confined to generalities concerning the neighbourhood. The visitor did not seem to be by any means a brilliant talker, and his manner was reserved and rather shy, so Jane had to task her conversational powers to the utmost.

Cissy decorously listened, heartily wishing the uninteresting stranger would take his leave that she and her mother might resume the important discussion which he had interrupted. But there he sat whilst Jane eloquently expatiated upon the glories, past and present, of Casterham—talked of the clothing club, the dean, the choir, the dorcas society, the almshouses, and the soup kitchen—the talked well, this busy, little woman, not gossipping, but as if her heart were in what she said, and her listener appreciated the fact and felt interested. Presently the sweet chimings of Saint Cuthbert rang out for evening service, and Jane inquired:

"Have you been at service in the cathedral yet, Mr. Osbrey?"

"No, but I think of going this evening," he said, rising, and smiling as he continued. "You must excuse me for having made such an unreasonably long visit, but recollect, Mrs. Emerson, you are the nearest approach to a friend I have in Casterham."

"As yet," replied Jane, gaily. "As yet, Mr. Osbrey. You are sure to make plenty of friends, and far more influential ones than a poor school-mistress."

"I never value my friends according to their purses or positions," said he, his face flushing, and then after an awkwardly said farewell, he hurried off to the cathedral, and shortly after he left a less agreeable visitor called upon Jane—to wit, her landlord, whose rent was more than due.

Jane Emerson and her daughter had an honest horror of debt: independently of the feeling of not wishing to be under the obligations which it inevitably entails, they, very properly, looked upon it as being dishonest and unprincipled to the last degree; and, speaking in a worldly sense, that is the right feeling for helpless women to have. If a man be obliged to incur a debt there are a hundred things to which he can turn, and, if he be honestly disposed, earn the means of repaying it: but with a woman it is far different—the ban under which social prejudice has laid her and the fetters which society has thrown around her make many a woman quail and shrink from bravely fighting the battle of life, and often rendering herself independent without losing any of her womanliness.

Thoughts something like the foregoing agitated Cissy's mind as she sat with her bible open upon her knees in the silence of her own

bedroom—her sweet, sad face wet with the bitter tears which she endeavoured to restrain before her mother, and then she knelt down and prayed to the never-failing friend and helper, who ere Cissy slept that night sent her hopeful thoughts—aye, thoughts of so aspiring a nature that they almost terrified the quiet maiden.

And Jane? Pale and heavy-hearted after spending a sleepless night, she took her place at the breakfast-table: she mechanically swallowed a cup of tea, toyed for a while with a piece of toast, and finally put it aside with a sigh. Cissy did her utmost to appear cheerful, but it was with an effort she said:

"Come now, mother dear, you must try and eat a better breakfast, you will require it to support you, as I am going to ask you for a holiday and you will have to manage the children all by yourself to-day."

"A holiday, Cissy, what for?"

"That is a secret," she said, saucily nodding her head. "I shall only tell you this much, that I am going to see a lady. You trust me, mother, don't you?" and Cissy put her arms around her and kissed her.

Of course Jane trusted her, her own darling, good Cissy, who, a couple of hours later had left the town of Casterham a good half mile behind her, feeling, as she approached her intended destination, that she was the veriest coward, and, at the same time, by a curious paradox, the most conceited young woman in the broad dominions of her most gracious Majesty.

She passes through a handsome old-fashioned gateway, walks through a long, pleasant, shady avenue. A gentleman approaches, she bows, and the Rev. Edward Osbrey takes off his hat and passes on wondering what brings her there, whilst she is occupied with a like surmise concerning him.

## CHAPTER II.

ELEANOR CHANCEPRETH, the only child and sole heiress of a late Bishop of Casterham, was, at the period at which we introduce her to the reader, a woman of about thirty-six years of age. A large-hearted, enthusiastic woman, one of the foremost of those who so undauntedly advocated the right a woman has to support herself honestly and honourably in many of the callings which the other sex monopolised upon the ground of social prejudice alone.

She was no advocate of the so-called "Woman's Rights" society. Marriage, she held, and rightly, to be a woman's true mission, and believed that the loves and cares of husband and children are in themselves a discipline and an education: but looking that, she wanted to see women with an intelligent object in life, and, if necessary, able and willing to support themselves.

So Eleanor Chancepreth was called "strong-minded," that tacit reproach when applied to a woman, and the matrons and virgins of society ascribed her thirty-six years of spinsterhood to that fact. They could hardly ascribe it to anything else, for nature and fortune had both been bountiful to her. She was rather below than above the middle height, of a clear, brunette complexion, and appeared to have been in her early youth very handsome.

Her small, intellectually-shaped head, undisfigured by any modern monotony, was adorned with long, silvery black ringlets, which she wore after the fashion of her girlhood, added to which personal attractions, she was the daughter of a late Bishop of Casterham, and sole mistress of Wheatfield, where she lived with her maternal aunt, a placid old lady, who looked upon her whimsical niece as an embodiment of sundry of the signs and tokens of the approaching millennium.

Cissy Emerson had often heard of Miss Chancepreth—knew her to be a good, kind woman, able and willing to help those who tried to help themselves, and to her she determined to apply for advice. She knew Miss Chancepreth had a large and influential connection, and hoped, if she would interest herself in the

matter, that she might possibly obtain some tuitions for her.

Cissy was not entirely unknown to Miss Chancepreth, who, upon her entrance, greeted her cordially with that rare winning smile which completely reassured the trembling girl, whose courage entirely forsook her, and who heartily wished herself back in the stuffy little schoolroom. In a few words she told the object of her visit, and concluded by saying:

"I should not dream of troubling you, Miss Chancepreth, were it not that my mother and I have no other resource beyond our own exertions."

"It is no trouble. I shall be only too happy to help in any way in my power; but recollect, I am ignorant as to your acquirements. Are you a good linguist?"

"I have learned French."

"Who has been your teacher?"

"My mother. I have never had any other teacher."

Miss Chancepreth looked serious.

"Do you mean to say you have never had any instruction except from your mother?"

"No."

She took Cissy's hand in hers, and pressing it said, earnestly and kindly:

"You have come to me for advice. Will you promise not to be offended at what I am going to say? It may not be quite palatable, but I feel it is only right to say it."

"Why should I be offended, Miss Chancepreth? You are very good to interest yourself in me at all."

"Will you give up the idea of teaching and go to business?"

Cissy started, and unthinkingly answered rather stiffly:

"I am a lady, and no lady would dream of going to business of any kind; but why do you advise me to give up teaching?"

"Because, my dear girl," said Miss Chancepreth, still retaining her hold of Cissy's hand, "I know that governesses, except they be very highly educated, seldom earn more than merely what suffices to clothe and support themselves. Instances are very rare of their being able to lay by anything for a rainy day, and, recollect, there is a great deal of uncertain weather in this world. Now, you—I have only your own words for it—are evidently not educated up to a standard to command a good salary, consequently, as you have your mother also to think of, would it not be the wiser and better plan to turn to some better paying employment which does not require an advanced education?"

Poor Cissy? The foolish, vexed tears arose to her eyes, and her heart sank as she listened to the clear-headed, practical woman whose sentiments seemed to be but the echo of her mother's.

"I am sorry for having trespassed upon your time," said she, trying to disengage her hand from the cool, firm one which held it fast, "but I could not think for a moment of such a thing as business."

Eleanor Chancepreth thought for a moment. A shade passed over her sweet countenance, and she said, quickly:

"Well, let that pass. You will not try business, we must think of something else. Are you industrious?"

"I think so," said Cissy, in horror lest any derogatory manual labour should be next proposed.

"Are you quick at learning?"

"I believe I am. I know I have an excellent memory."

"A most desirable thing. Now, Miss Emerson, I will tell you what I will do for you. I am very conscientious about recommending anyone, particularly as a teacher, so if you make up your mind to work and try and pass the next examination for women I will do my very best to procure you plenty of good tuitions, but I will not recommend you unless you have a guarantee that you are fully qualified to teach."

Cissy quailed. She had heard about the examinations, and had a kind of floating, undeveloped idea that one should be a perfect mine



of erudition even to attempt to understand the synopsis of the course of study laid down. Still, a proposition of the kind was decidedly better than the obnoxious one of business.

"I know very little about the examinations," she said, "and I do not think my mother would approve of my trying it."

"Your mother is a good, sensible woman as far as I have always heard. Shall I go and speak to her about it?"

"I shall be very glad if you will," answered Cissy, eagerly and intensely relieved; "but I do not think I should be able to go thoroughly through the immense number of subjects which are proposed for examination."

"Where there is a will there is a way. You are young, strong, intelligent, and healthy, and you have a year before you to study in. I shall call upon your mother this evening."

The school children were just dispersing as Cissy, hot and weary, arrived home. She told her mother the result of her morning's visit, and felt considerable dismay when Jane said:

"Cissy, I think the business project was the best one. How are we to be supported for a year whilst you are studying for examination?"

They had hardly finished their dinner when Miss Chancepeth drove up to the door. The neat, well-ordered appearance of the small house struck her, and before she had been many minutes seated she said suddenly:

"Mrs. Emerson, would you take a boarder?"

The idea had never occurred to Jane before, and she said so.

"Because," continued Miss Chancepeth, "a clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Osbrey, asked me this morning if I knew of any quiet, respectable family where he could board."

"I know Mr. Osbrey," said Jane, brightening up, "and from what I have seen of him I do not think I should object to him as an inmate, that is if he would not object to the school."

"Never mind that, I'll speak to him," replied she, decidedly. "I have no doubt but that that difficulty, if it be one, will be overcome."

Yes, it was overcome, and so was a greater difficulty—that of Jane's consent to Cissy going in for the examination. Mathematics and arithmetic proved the chief stumbling-blocks. In the latter branch she had gone as far as the rule of three in a desultory kind of manner, but as no sort of regular system had ever been pursued with her education, she consequently found it all the more difficult to apply herself diligently to the intelligent mastering of the subjects. And she worked with a will.

But the girl began to droop. She looked tired and overworked. Jane's watchful eyes soon noticed the change, and she would have peremptorily forbidden her to continue her studies had she not known how much Cissy had staked upon their issue. For, pitiable to tell, a new school on a more fashionable and advanced scale, had been opened in the neighbourhood, and had seriously injured that of Jane, and the liberal pay which they received from Mr. Osbrey being their principal dependence, consequently it was of more importance than ever that Cissy should be successful at the examination, as it represented a possibility of her earning her living in a manner consonant with her feelings, otherwise she and her mother must turn their minds to something else.

And Mr. Osbrey, her kind, unwearying tutor—how patiently and devotedly did he help her, not alone in mathematics, but in every other branch of her studies. He too noticed Cissy's overworked look, and one evening after a long and wearisome mathematical lesson he said:

"Miss Emerson, this is Friday. I would recommend you to take a holiday until Monday next; you look tired."

"I wish you would give up the idea of the examination altogether," said her mother, a sudden feeling of alarm taking possession of her at her cause for uneasiness being in a manner justified.

"Mother, how can you say so?" and Cissy gave her an imploring look.

"Now, Mr. Osbrey, of what use are mathematics to any girl?"

Jane asked the same question exactly six times a week, and he as often replied:

"They are an excellent discipline for the mind. As for being of any practical use to women, I do not really believe they are, but they train women to habits of reasoning and of thinking with clearness and exactness, besides decidedly strengthening the memory for other branches of study."

"I do not believe much in this fuss about female education, especially mathematics" (that was Jane's grand standpoint). "They will not make women better wives and mothers than those of my day, and it is my opinion that Cissy will not recollect a single proposition in euclid twelve months hence."

Mr. Osbrey smiled.

"Probably not. We do not want Miss Emerson to recollect them."

"Then why learn it?" asked Jane in amazement.

"Miss Emerson is merely learning euclid as a discipline for her mind. She is not required to recollect it. Having learnt it, it would be then just as well for her to forget the technicalities of it as soon as possible. No man would like to have a blue-stocking for a wife."

An awkward pause. Jane knit on in silence. Cissy bent her head over her books, face, neck and ears crimson. Mr. Osbrey moved his long legs about uneasily, finally started up in desperation and saying he had a sick call to make, left the house and did not return until it was time for prayers.

But after that conversation a constraint seemed to have fallen upon each. Mr. Osbrey became, if possible, more awkward and shy, and Cissy more reserved. She no longer told him all her little hopes and fears with reference to the examination, and seemed timid of consulting him about her studies. In short, two people living in the same house could hardly have been more uncomfortably situated with respect to each other than Jane Emerson's boarder and her daughter.

March set in, and brought gloom and sadness to the small house in Casterham, for Jane, bright, busy Jane, lay ill, and Mr. Osbrey was gone. Yes, he had been engaged merely during the indisposition of another clergyman, who having recovered, of course returned to his curacy. These were dreary days for poor Cissy, the whole responsibility of the remaining handful of pupils dignified by the name of "the school" of course devolved upon her, as also household matters and the care of her mother.

Every moment she could snatch was given to her books, but as the examination time drew nearer and nearer she could not avoid wishing oh, so earnestly!—that Mr. Osbrey were there to help her to reduce her poor, troubled, over-stretched mind into something like order.

Jane's illness was a serious attack of a painful internal disorder—a tedious weariful illness—during which she required unremitting care and attention. She was for many weeks confined to her bed, and whilst there she earnestly prayed to her Heavenly Father, if it were His good pleasure, to spare her yet a little longer to her darling child—her proud, sensitive Cissy, so unfit to combat with the rubs and slights of the world; and her loving prayers were answered, for, upon the last day of the examination, when Cissy returned wearied with excitement, she had the intense happiness of seeing her mother, for the first time since her illness, lying on the sofa in their sitting-room, and seated beside her was the Rev. Edward Osbrey.

The Rev. Edward Osbrey, looking plainer and decidedly shabbier than ever, stood up as Cissy entered, looking, in her fresh, light, summer muslin, and her sweet face, to which excitement had given a faint flush, as pretty a girl as ever distracted the mind of a plain, penniless curate. After the first greetings were over, Jane said, with one of her old, merry laughs:

"Mr. Osbrey would not stay to tea, Cissy, unless I joined the party, so he carried me downstairs himself."

And soon after tea he carried me up again, tenderly and carefully as only a big, gentle, tender man can. There was no awkwardness in his manner then, and Cissy, as she watched him, could not help thinking that he almost seemed used to the work.

"I shall say good-bye now, as well as good-night, Mrs. Emerson," said he, holding out his hand.

"Shall we not see you again before you leave?"

"No; I start by the early train to-morrow morning."

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Osbrey. I really think your visit has done me good. Cissy and I were so lonely here all by ourselves."

Cissy accompanied him downstairs, and when they entered the sitting-room he sat down, and said, in a business-like manner:

"Now, Miss Emerson, show me your examination papers, and tell me how you have answered."

She produced the papers, saying nervously: "I hope I have succeeded, for everyone seems so infatuated about this examination that I fancy I shall have a bad chance of tuitions unless I am granted a certificate."

He looked over the papers, making but few comments as he listened to Cissy's answers. The twilight was fast fading when he arose to go. She was disappointed that he had not said anything as to her probable prospects, disappointed that he said so little upon any subject, and the girl's heart was full.

She was troubled, and longed for some sympathy. Her heart ached for it, but her proud, reticent nature never let that be known. Her mother, who fancied she knew her so well, had never discovered it. This night she felt as if she must have sympathy—must have some kind, hopeful word spoken to her, and as her visitor was leaving the room she laid her hand upon his arm, and said, tremulously:

"Mr. Osbrey, you have not told me what you think of me."

She could not see his face distinctly, but she felt that there was the whole pent-up love of a strong man in the words which he almost whispered passionately:

"Cissy, Cissy, what do I think of you. I have no right to tell you."

For one moment his arms were around her, his face rested on the shining brown hair, and then he was gone, whilst Cissy, left alone, buried her face in her hands and shed the sweetest and the bitterest tears she had ever shed in her life. When she was sufficiently composed she returned to her mother, who eagerly inquired:

"What does Mr. Osbrey think of your chances of success?"

"He did not express any opinion, mother."

Jane made no further remark, but her heart sank, for it seemed to her ominous that he had not said anything hopeful to Cissy. Some days passed on, and Jane was not making very satisfactory progress towards recovery. The exertion of having been downstairs had evidently been too much for her, and one day, when Doctor Newman came, he took Cissy aside, and said, seriously:

"I regret to say your mother is not progressing as I would wish. Could you not bring her away to the country for a time?"

Cissy hesitated.

"Is it absolutely necessary?" she asked.

"It would certainly be the surest way of hastening her recovery. Indeed, I may say the only way. Change of air is absolutely indispensable for your mother."

And the doctor, a good-natured, thoughtless man, bowed himself out, and left Cissy pondering over their slender finances, which, let her reckon them which way she would, certainly left no very great surplus fund for a trip to the country.

But the doctor had said it was absolutely indispensable, so Cissy set herself to work, and ere another fortnight had passed she and her mother were located in two rooms in a small cottage on the outskirts of the busy sea-board

town of Tirwellyan, about forty miles from Casterham.

It was not exactly the locality that either would have chosen, but it was the only available place which presented itself at the time, being inexpensive, and the air being considered pure and good for invalids. And at Tirwellyan, when Jane was beginning to feel rested and better, the news of the result of the examination reached them. Cissy had failed!

No need to dwell upon Cissy's utter despair. There was her mother likely to be a permanent invalid, depending upon her for everything, requiring tender, delicate fare and treatment, and she was scarcely able to procure more than the mere necessities of life for her. And should she even be able to procure those?

In her first wild revulsion of feeling she fiercely and passionately inveighed against God, who, she said, had deprived her of the very means of gaining a subsistence. Her mother, that sensible, good mother, terrified and alarmed at this passionate outbreak of feeling on the part of her usually gentle and placid Cissy, waited until it had exhausted itself, and then, taking the pretty head upon her loving bosom, said:

"Cissy, depend upon it, this disappointment has been sent for your good."

"I do not believe so, mother," she answered, with a great sob in her voice. "Mother, darling, if you were in good health perhaps I should not so much mind, but I know the kind of woman Miss Chancepreth is, and that when she says a thing she means it. Therefore, having lost the examination, I cannot look to her to help me to procure tuitions."

"Not to procure tuitions, Cissy, but she may help you to something else."

"Mother, mother, do not talk of something else. I know by that you mean business of some kind or other, and now, more than ever, I could not endure the thought of it."

Jane sighed.

"Cissy, my own child, you are not more anxious to keep up your position than I am, but it goes to my heart to think of your slaving your youth away as an ill-paid visiting governess."

But, for the first time in her life, Cissy had a secret from her mother; for that mother's sake she would have toiled at any labour that could be proposed to her, but latterly another feeling arose up in cruel antagonism with her filial love, a feeling which a woman feels at some time or other, or she has not lived half her life. The question at once rose to her mind—

"What would he think of my doing so?"

Do not censure her. Do not say she was wanting in love towards her mother; but with the recollection of Gerald Osbrey's voice and manner on that twilight summer's evening came the conviction to her mind that she had a right to think of his feelings in the disposal of herself, and he, she fancied, being a clergyman, would not like the idea of her undertaking any kind of business.

She never gave these thoughts words. No; she felt she had no right to hint them even to her mother. She hardly confessed them to herself; but, almost unconsciously, they were the chief motives which kept urging her to oppose any proposition of work out of the profession of teaching.

However, yet darker days were in store for Cissy Emerson and her mother. They had been about six weeks at Tirwellyan, and Jane was slowly gaining strength, when a letter arrived from Miss Chancepreth saying that the illness of a loved relative obliged her to set out for Rome immediately, and that she did not expect to return to Casterham sooner than the following summer. The letter enclosed a bank-note for ten pounds, Miss Chancepreth saying it was her Christmas present given a few months before the time. A proud flush arose to Cissy's face as she said, still looking at the note:

"It is very kind of Miss Chancepreth, no doubt, but I hate receiving charity from anyone, mother. Although we want the money badly I wish we could civilly return it."

But Jane made no answer, and as Cissy turned

quickly round she was shocked to find that her mother had fainted, and a letter to her, which had come by the same post as that which brought Miss Chancepreth's, lay upon the floor beside her. With the help of the woman who owned the cottage, Cissy succeeded in restoring her to consciousness and then, taking up the letter to find what had so affected her mother—then—oh, then—Cissy's strong young heart quailed as she read the contents.

It was from a kindly neighbour, who wrote to say that owing to the carelessness of the person left in charge of their house at Casterham, it and an adjoining house had been burnt to the ground, and not one article of their property had it been possible to save.

Through the whole of that miserable night Cissy sat by the bedside with her hand fast clasped in her mother's. The next day Jane lay muttering incoherently, and refused all offers of food. Cissy became alarmed, and as the afternoon advanced, and her mother appeared to become worse, she sent for a physician who had been recommended by their former doctor in Casterham.

Doctor Pearson came, and gradually drew from Cissy the whole account of her mother's illness, and the circumstances which had led to her last seizure. Incidentally she mentioned Miss Chancepreth's name, and the doctor said with more interest than he had hitherto evinced:

"Miss Eleanor Chancepreth of Wheatfield?"

"Yes," said Cissy, "the same. "Do you know her?"

"I have known her. Miss Emerson, I shall see your mother to-morrow."

And a true friend the good Doctor Pearson proved, and so far did he insinuate himself into the good graces of the reticent Cissy that she at last confided to him the history of her disappointments at the examination, and actually asked his advice and assistance. She also mentioned Miss Chancepreth's proposal that she should go to business and stated her own dislike to the plan.

He said he would bear the matter in mind, and Cissy, knowing him to be a man to be depended upon, was therefore not astonished when a few days later she received a note from him requesting him to call at his house. The doctor received her kindly, and after making some inquiries about her mother's health, said:

"When speaking to me the other day, Miss Emerson, I gathered from you that you are very anxious to be employed in some way—that your circumstances are such as to render it necessary?"

"Yes, I am anxious, if possible, to procure tuitions."

"Tuitions, was it? Well, I heard of something that I thought might possibly suit you; but it is not a tuition."

"I could not engage in anything which would separate me from my mother."

"No, decidedly not. Therefore, it is because there would be no necessity for you to be separated from your mother that it occurred to me that this post might be likely to suit you. It is in a shop."

Cissy grew cold. Business—business again. It seemed to haunt her, to dog her footsteps like a Fate. She said nothing, and Doctor Pearson continued:

"This is an affair in which I feel very much interested, and the facts are simply these: John Burton, a patient of mine, having a wife and six children, has become hopelessly paralysed. He owns a small baker's establishment in the town, but since his illness the various persons who have been managing it for him have acted most dishonestly. His wife is incapable of keeping accounts, therefore he asked me if I knew of anyone, and I at once thought of you as you told me you were a good arithmetician. Would you think of it?—the salary is very fair."

"In the first place I know nothing about business, and then should I not be separated from my mother?"

"No. Burton is obliged to live away from the shop on account of his health, so there are

a couple of rooms you and your mother could have; and as for the business, you can learn it. I fancy it lies with yourself alone to accept or reject the situation."

So Cissy left, saying she would think over it and consult her mother.

### CHAPTER III.

It was well for Cissy and her mother to have a home, no one denies that. Cissy had to work hard, to be up early and late, but she was fairly paid for it. Besides, they had apartments free. Taken as a whole, it was rather a good post than otherwise, looking at it from a pecuniary and worldly point of view; but Cissy was young, refined in her ideas and sensitive. She had all youth's hopes and desires welling up in her bosom, and her sensitive nature rebelled against the rough, coarse people with whom she came in contact.

She went about her daily business with a great ache at her heart—an ache which sadly, cruelly wrung her when she remembered Edward Osbrey's embrace, upon which she had brooded in her fond, foolish heart; and then the deep, dull pain grew deeper as she recollected that she had raised between them the strongest barrier that can be raised between man and woman—the barrier of social distinction.

Yes, it was very hard to bear. She thought that if she had never known Edward Osbrey she would not have minded so much the difference between her position then and that in which she had been born; that she might in time have become reconciled to being a baker's assistant, and perhaps might have married the steady, handsome young farmer who had proposed to her when she had been only a few weeks in her new employment.

"Did Edward Osbrey love her?" that was the question she asked whenever she allowed herself to think of him.

Her reason said "No," or surely he would have sought her out. Nearly a year had elapsed since that twilight summer's evening when Cissy had first asked herself the question; but when she put it to her heart it always said "Yes," until one Sunday in May as Cissy Emerson was going to church, she saw, walking a few yards before her, Edward Osbrey, with a young lady leaning upon his arm. Then they turned into the church, the very church to which Cissy was going.

"His wife!" she at once concluded, and for a moment became sick and faint. She lingered in the graveyard to recover herself, and then, upon entering the church and taking her seat in the pew in which she usually sat, found that she was seated beside the lady whom she had seen with Edward Osbrey.

Where was he? The church was very large and very crowded, and Cissy sat behind a pillar. But as the service proceeded she recognised the well-known—ay, and yearned-for, voice which read the lessons for the day.

The lady had a pleasant, loveable, happy face and plainly dressed masses of lustrous brown hair. She sang well, Cissy noted that, and she remarked her dress also—elegant yet plain.

"Just like a clergyman's wife," she thought, half bitterly, half satirically.

Until they were sitting after dinner reading and enjoying their Sabbath holiday, Cissy never told her mother that she had seen Mr. Osbrey and, she supposed, his wife.

"Mr. Osbrey and his wife!" exclaimed Jane, to whom a little bit of gossip about old Casterham folk was quite a godsend. "Did they see you? Were you speaking to them?"

And Cissy—poor, miserable, heartsore Cissy had to recount how she had seen them going to church, how they had not seen her; had to tell how the lady was dressed, even her probable age, and Jane then wandered off into speculations as to whether Mr. Osbrey would call and see them, or whether she ought to find out where they were staying and call upon them. But the latter Cissy stoutly opposed and Jane yielded.

For many days and weeks afterwards Cissy



often started when a stranger entered the shop; but the time wore on and she neither saw nor heard anything of Edward Osbrey. Then when Cissy was schooling herself into forgetfulness, or rather into apathy, when she tried to think that she never had or never could have any interests beyond the price of bread and the correct balancing of her accounts—then came a day, the day of which was seared upon her memory, the anniversary of the day upon which she had received the fatal news of her failure at the examination.

It was midday, the dinner-hour of the work-people, so she was alone in the stuffy little shop dressed in a calico gown, over which she wore a large holland apron with a bib to it. She was seated behind her little desk, when a shadow fell across the threshold, and looking up she saw two people enter the shop—the Rev. Edward Osbrey and the lady.

Cissy did not scream or faint, or in any other way distinguish herself. No, she descended from her rostrum, and stood behind the counter, and the Rev. Edward Osbrey came forward and said:

"How do you do, Miss Emerson?"

And when she did not reply at once, he turned, drew the lady forward, and said:

"Miss Emerson, allow me to introduce my sister Mary to you."

Then they went upstairs to see Jane, and Cissy apologised for having to leave them, saying she was obliged to return to the shop. She there supplied the wants of a ragged little urchin, and was again returning to her desk, when the door at the end of the shop was opened and somebody entered, and taking two little floury hands in his, said, with a world of suppressed eagerness in the tone:

"Cissy, I have come for you. Will you be my wife?"

Fate, in the person of the apprentice boy, here interposed, and Cissy made no reply. He stared at the tall, bare-headed, strange clergyman, and was only recalled to his senses by Cissy's desiring him to attend to the shop until her return. Edward Osbrey repeated his question when they were alone in the passage and received for reply:

"Recollect, I am now only a baker's assistant."

"Suppose you became a rector's assistant instead?" said he, dryly.

She looked up at him shyly. As the Rev. Gerald Osbrey ascended the stairs and entered the sitting-room, there were sundry flour-marks discernible upon his coat and superfine clerical waistcoat. Probably, in his awkwardness, he had been rubbing against the flour-sacks in the shop.

And then, in the evening, when the shop was shut, bright, good-natured Mary Osbrey benevolently engaged Jane in conversation whilst Cissy and Gerald went out for a walk, and wandered down beyond the town, off to the pleasant, shingly beach where:

The soft light quivered on the wave  
As if to hush its murmurings with a kiss.

And there they sat them down upon a huge boulder, and Gerald told her how he had loved her ever since he had first seen her, but had been too poor to marry and did not think it right to draw her into an indefinitely long engagement; but a comfortable living in Yorkshire, in the gift of Miss Chancepreth's uncle, having become vacant, he had been appointed to it.

"And then I came at once to Tirwellyan, Cissy, but could not gain any tidings of you."

"I saw you."

"Cissy" reproachfully. "And why did you not recognise me—speak to me?"

"You were officiating in the church—besides, I thought your sister was—your wife."

His heart bounded. It was so hard to excite a little love interest in Cissy, so the spice of latent jealousy which tinged the foregoing speech tickled his masculine vanity inexpressibly.

"Had it not been for Miss Chancepreth, who has returned from Rome, probably I should not

have found you out even now; but Doctor Pearson, who is a friend of hers, told her all about you."

"Did you think me very stupid?" she asked, irrelevantly.

"Stupid! For acting like a brave girl and supporting your delicate mother. No, I love you, if possible, Cissy, all the more."

"I mean did you think me stupid for having lost the examination?"

"No, for I never fancied you would have succeeded. What about the Euclid? Have you forgotten it?"

She smiled.

"I think mother was right. I don't remember a bit about it."

There was no one near and it was becoming dark, so Gerald put his arm around her, and drawing her closer to him whispered:

"Cissy, my pet, you have utterly failed in your endeavours to become a blue-stocking, but you have proved yourself to be a good, sensible girl. You are no mathematician, Cissy; there are no squares and angles about you. However, as I, big awkward fellow that I am, supply that deficiency, it doesn't so much signify. And now, having satisfactorily settled the matter, I think we had better return to your mother and Mary."

Two months later and there were two weddings at Wheatfield. One we know all about, that is Cissy's and Gerald Osbrey's, but the other wedding was one which no one had ever dreamt of, and it happened in this wise.

Henry Pearson and Eleanor Chancepreth had been "friends in youth," more than friends, and each knew it, although no word had been spoken. But the girl was poor and proud; the woman rich, but as a woman, helpless. She could not make advances of any sort, so he went his way, and toiled and made a world-wide name for himself, and then returned to the love of his life, whom he found waiting for him.

E. O. B.

[THE END.]

## TIME'S REVENGE; OR, FOILED AT THE LAST.

### CHAPTER XXX.

#### 'TWIXT HOPE AND FEAR.

"My sweet darling, my own dear love," said Margaret, embracing Fayette. "How pale you look. I am so sorry to be so neglectful of my angel girl, but I must not let my inclinations prevent my seeing after business. After a few days I shall have more time to devote to you. And when we obtain our just due, why, we will snap our fingers at care."

It was evident she knew nothing of her mysterious visit to Fayette's room the previous night. Fayette was resolved to seek the advice of her old friend before saying anything further, so she merely asked, with some timidity:

"May I go out for a little while with the servant?"

"Certainly, love. But do not let her miss you as she did the other day. Good-bye for the present, sweet. We must have the roses back in that pretty complexion of yours."

She kissed Fayette, and let her go. The young girl found Elizabeth waiting on the stairs, and hurried with her down into the street. She told her she wished to go to Mr. Arundell's office in Finsbury Square.

"You must have a cab, miss, that'll be best," said Elizabeth, who was a tolerably safe and shrewd guide as a rule.

Fortunately Elizabeth had no "young man," although she was "speculating on" and angling

after two or three; therefore she was free to accompany Fayette. As they drove along she felt herself to be "quite the young lady," and gave herself inflated airs, and rather patronised her new friend.

Fayette could not remember the number of the house, but the cabman happened to know it. Elizabeth, paying and dismissing the man with the air of a grand duchess, led the way into the office.

"His Mr. Harrundell hin?" she inquired.

"Which if he his, please tell him as 'ow a young lady wants to see him."

Mr. Arundell was in his private room. As Fayette was ushered in he rose to his feet with an expression of amazement.

There was no time to be lost in idle talk and needless apologies or explanations. Fayette, as briefly as she could, told Mr. Arundell of the position in which she found herself, related the scene which had taken place in her room the night before, and showed him the paper which Margaret Lascelles had given her while in a trance.

Mr. Arundell listened, grave and almost silent. He seemed touched by the proof of confidence Fayette evidenced in thus coming to him. With compressed lips, he read the writing on the paper, then abruptly rose.

"Pardon me for a moment, my dear child," he said. "You trust me, I hope—you know I would do the best I can for you?"

Tears dimmed Fayette's eyes. She tried to speak, but her voice failed her.

"There is no time to lose," said Mr. Arundell.

"I will return in a few moments."

He went out, looking at the sheet of paper containing the address. In about seven or eight minutes he came back.

"If you are not this Mrs. Lascelles' child," he said, then, re-seating himself, "you must not stay with her."

"Oh," cried Fayette clasping her hands, "if I could only leave her. It makes me wretched to be with her. It is like being in prison."

Mr. Arundell looked at her very attentively over his spectacles, and sorrowfully noted how pale and pinched the beautiful face had become since he had last seen it.

"Poor child!" he said. "But the question is, where could you go? And after all, you may be deceived. People who walk in their sleep do and think such things. But supposing she is not your mother—perhaps your cousin Beattie could give you a home. I do not know how she is situated just at present, but I presume she will be her own mistress. Your aunt has gone to visit some relatives of Mr. Fordham's somewhere in the country, and will be away for two or three days."

Fayette's heart contracted with a pang. She had hoped, irrationally, that Mr. Arundell would not have allowed her to return to Margaret Lascelles. But now every door seemed closed against her. With a pathetic look of despair, she folded her hands on her breast, and gazed mutely at Mr. Arundell in a helpless, beseeching way.

"You see, my dear," said the old gentleman, taking off his spectacles, and rubbing them vigorously with a silk handkerchief, "I could not venture to interfere unless I were sure, quite sure, that this Mrs. Lascelles had no legal right to exercise control over you. I need not tell you that so long as we are unable to prove anything but strong suspicions you are bound to obey her as your mother. It is not as if some unknown stranger had sprung out of the earth and claimed you. This—this lady has always been known as your mother; your aunt knows all about her—you cannot resist her until—until—unless—Mr. Arundell's voice fell half unconsciously into a whisper—"unless we can prove her to be an impostor."

The scared look on the pretty face before him out the kind old man to the heart. The silence, the deep despair, of the poor girl proved almost more than he could endure.

"I fear her," said Fayette, and the soft melody died out of her voice. "I cannot say why, but I would rather go to a real prison than return to her."

"I would give twenty pounds to see your aunt, Miss Ibbotson, come in at that door," cried Mr. Arundell. "But—"

As he spoke a gentle tap sounded. Against their reason and judgment, both turned towards the door, with a foolish hope of seeing the hard, yet kindly face of Aunt Prue. But a good-looking young clerk appeared.

"Well?" asked Mr. Arundell.

"They say you cannot have an answer to the telegram under five hours, at the very earliest, sir," said the young man, trying very hard not to look admiringly at Fayette.

"You are quite sure?"

"Quite sure, sir. I asked very specially and very pressing. I sent the telegram to Provence, as you directed, sir, and paid for the answer."

"Very well," said Mr. Arundell, and the good-looking young man went away, terribly hard hit by Fayette's pathetic beauty and grace. Poor fellow! he had not even been noticed by the young girl; he might have been Punchinello himself for ought she knew—or cared. The word "Provence," had caught her ear, and set her heart beating, and she looked at Mr. Arundell.

"Child," said he, "I have telegraphed to this lady, this Sister Laure, to ask if she has in her possession a confession of child-stealing, made by a woman in May, 1870. I have taken for granted she is still living. We cannot have an answer until five or six this evening at the very earliest, supposing she is still living, and supposing she is still at the convent."

There was a dead silence for a few minutes. Fayette's heart began to throb painfully. She felt as people are said to feel when they are drowning. With one swift backward glance she saw all her past life; even the smallest details flashed past her, as if rushing by on quickly running water—then, coming down to the latest moment, she wondered if poor Elizabeth was getting tired of waiting for her. She stood up, turned ashy white, and sat down again. Mr. Arundell splashed some water from a decanter into a glass, and going quickly round his office table, held it to her lips.

"Thank you," Fayette said, gently. "I am so foolish—but I am very tried. Last night I had so little rest, I was frightened; too—"

She shuddered, and glanced around half fearfully.

"Are you alone?" asked her old friend, anxiously.

"No. The servant at the house where—where we are staying is with me."

"I am thankful for that. Where is she?"

"In the—I don't know, I left her sitting on a chair where those gentlemen are when I came in," said Fayette.

Mr. Arundell touched his bell. The good-looking young clerk lost not a second in answering it.

"Morris," said the old gentleman, "there is a young person—at least, a person—a servant, waiting out there. Bring her here, please."

In a moment Elizabeth appeared, ambling, smiling, ducking. She had an uneasy idea that the "himperent young fellars" in the outer office were "hall on the grin" but whether in admiration or derision she could not precisely define. The calm, bland aspect of Mr. Arundell set her at ease. She always declared that "she knew a real gent when she seed 'im."

The clerk closed the door, more in love with the beautiful Fayette than ever. Elizabeth reddened more rosy, and she dipped once more politely, as she had her best company clothes and finest company manners on. Mr. Arundell, not accustomed to this style of domestic, looked as surprised as if Mr. Morris had ushered in a youthful elephant or tame rhinoceros.

He had anticipated seeing a very different-looking personage to this smirking, self-satisfied young woman, although a precise picture had mirrored itself on his mind. For a moment he felt at a loss. He wished to make her an accomplice in a very innocent plot, but he did not know exactly how to most safely approach her.

"Sit down, please," he said.

Elizabeth lugged over a chair nearer to the table, reddened a shade more, glanced at Fayette, who was as white as a conventional ghost, struggled with an inclination to dust the seat of the chair on account of her magnificent violet gown, wondered what she ought to do with her sunshade, grinned at Mr. Arundell sheepishly, and plumped down, beaming like the sun.

Mr. Arundell cleared his throat, eyed the young domestic once more, and smiled benignly. He was in a quiet rage at being obliged to make a confederate of this girl; it was undignified, every way objectionable, but it could not be helped.

"I am sorry you should have had to wait so long for this young lady. What is your name?" he began.

Elizabeth thought the proper etiquette would be to stand, and curtsy politely. She considered rapidly, but decided to sit still.

"Elizabeth, sir, which people sometimes calls me Betsy, Betty, and Bet and Lisbeth, and Lizar, and sometimes some of the gentlemen in our 'ouse calls me all kinds of jokin' like names, which would be takin' liberty, you know, sir, only they does it so polite like one can't be offended like, don't you know, sir," answered Elizabeth, volubly. "Which my name properly is Elizabeth Sarah Ann Bray, bein', as I might make bold to tell you, sir—"

"Thank you," said Mr. Arundell. "Now, my good girl, you will, I am sure, take care of this young lady, because—well, you will, won't you?"

Elizabeth turned her eyes towards Fayette, with much the same strange yearning expression in them that fills the eyes of a Newfoundland dog when he looks at his own.

"In course I will, sir," she replied, with pathetic, unconscious earnestness. "Which I ought to, she bein', as one might say well nigh, as it were in London, which people say is a very wicked place, though for the matter of that, the place and the people seem well enough to me, but that might be, don't you know, because I've been born there, where I were born in Clerkenwell, only mother—"

"So you will be very kind to her, I know," Mr. Arundell went on. "And now, where may you be going? Out for a little day's pleasure, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Me and another girl—"

"Ah, very good. Now, this young lady came to me on a very important business. She wished to know something which I could not tell her, but I have sent to somebody else who will send me a letter. Now listen. About six o'clock I will send this letter to Miss Lascelles. Who would take that letter and give it to her?"

"Me, of course," promptly replied Elizabeth, bridling. "Which nobody never answers the door but me."

"Never mind. But suppose you are obliged to go out on an errand, and should be out when my messenger arrives?"

"Well, he must wait, or put the letter in the letter box," said Elizabeth. "Lor' bless you, sir, maddum's that proud she'd no more answer the door nor nothink at all. Bless you, sir—"

"You will then take the letter, and give it to her herself; mind, to no one else."

"I'll take care, sir. I'll take care she has it when nobody's lookin' like, you know," said Elizabeth.

Mr. Arundell looked shocked, but the astute Elizabeth saw he was pleased.

"No, no," said he. "Be careful Miss Lascelles has the letter, because it is very important, and I must have an answer at once. Will you please go back to the office where you were waiting just now. I will not keep you waiting many minutes, and then will you kindly take Miss Lascelles home again in a cab; you can get out yourself at the door of your home if you please, and go on your day's amusement."

Elizabeth ambled out. Fayette stood up, pale and despairing.

"Listen, child," said Mr. Arundell, taking

her little hands, which felt cold as ice through her gloves. "I have laid a little plot. I will send one of my clerks with the reply to my telegram to this mother-superior the moment it arrives. If this sleep-walking tale be true, and you are not Mrs. Lascelles' child, come at once to me with the person I shall send. If it is all a fancy, a dream, a miserable imagining—well, well—in any case I will telegraph and also write a letter to your aunt, Miss Ibbotson. My messenger will, I suppose, reach you about five or six o'clock. If I send word to you to come, get away at once, without a moment's delay. Do not stay for anything, but escape at once. I will take care of you. Keep up your courage, my dear. God bless you."

He bent and kissed her forehead, then led her out. Already he had had the forethought to direct one of the clerks to fetch a cab. Elizabeth was sitting as prim as any old Egyptian sphinx, her opinion of the "himperent young fellar" not in any way improved.

Mr. Arundell put Fayette in the cab, then signed for Elizabeth to follow. As Elizabeth crossed the pavement he held out his hand to her, much to the girl's surprise. But with pride and pleasure she extended her own hand.

"Good-bye, Elizabeth," said Mr. Arundell, smiling. "Be a good girl, and take care of Miss Lascelles."

Elizabeth scrambled in, conscious that he had pressed some money into her gloved hand, but ashamed to look. As she sat down she glanced at the coin.

"Which," she said to herself with amazed rapture, "it are a real suvering. Well, I never!" Then she beamed at Mr. Arundell, who was giving directions to the driver. "Which you may depend, sir," she called, "as I'll take all the care imaginable of the young lady. Which," she added to herself, "I didn't want to be paid like, for it is a pride and pleasure to—but a real suvering—well, a real gent is a real gent, and no mistake. I ain't got no opinion of gents in general, but a real gent is a gent as knows what's the proper thing, and I expect as he was struck by my genteel appearance, which, when I goes hout, nobody couldn't tell but what I were quite the young lady hall hover."

Margaret Lascelles had not returned when Fayette reached the house. She had gone to engage the services of a private detective, to keep watch for her at Altenham for a few days. Elizabeth left Fayette at the door of the house, for the girl was shrewd enough to know that if she did not go on her day's amusement it would only excite suspicion. But the girl resolved to return at five o'clock although her leave extended to nine.

"Which," she said to herself, "maddum needn't know nothing about, seein' as I've got my key, and can let myself in hall on the quiet like."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### TO THE RESCUE.

No prisoner awaiting the verdict to be pronounced ever experienced stronger agitation and anguish of mind than was endured by Fayette while watching for Mr. Arundell's messenger. Her pure, truthful soul revolted against the deceit she was compelled to show towards Margaret Lascelles. Had Margaret not on her side been feverishly anxious to conceal her thoughts and schemes, the young girl's face would have played traitor. About five o'clock Margaret pleaded a headache, and evidently tried to rid herself of Fayette.

"Sweet love, perhaps if I lie quite still, and darken the room, this pain may go off," she said. "But no, darling, you must not leave me. We have been so little together, and we must learn to love each other."

"I will go to my own room for an hour," said Fayette, trying to speak without tell-tale eagerness. "I will write a letter to my cousin Beattie."

Margaret Lascelles hesitated.



"I suppose you ought to write to her," she said, slowly. "Yes, yes, you must write. But pray be guarded. Will you let me see what you have written when your letter is finished? Will you mind if I suggest one or two things?"

Fayette's face flushed partly with anger. "I will show you my letter when it is written," she replied, with some coldness.

"Perhaps—would you mind coming down here in about an hour, and writing your letter here?" asked Margaret. "Ah, well, you wish to be free, sweet love. Very well. Go, darling. In about an hour we shall have tea, and if you are industrious you can show me the letter, mignonne. What a horrid vegetation existence this is. We are buried as much as if we were two cabbages growing in a kitchen garden. Love, dearest, when we gain our rights we will go to Paris. You shall be dressed like a queen, and make a splendid marriage."

Her pale, sea-green eyes began to glow. Fayette felt a secret terror as she half raised herself, apparently with an idea of talking over the brilliant future. The young girl rose, unwillingly accepted the kiss pressed on her forehead, and escaped.

As she flew up the dark staircase to her own room her heart throbbed painfully—she felt as if she must be suffocated.

"How long shall I have to wait?" she asked herself almost in agony. "What will the answer be? This suspense is more than I can bear."

A footstep alarmed her, and she tried to run up the few remaining stairs, but her limbs failed her. With a trembling hand she clung to the balustrade.

"Hi—miss—hi!" whispered Elizabeth, whose step had frightened her. "Stop, miss; look here. The old gent's sent this yere note. Don't make a row—I don't want old maddum to hear. The man as brings it's a-waiting on the other side of the street, and he've got a cab jest round the corner like, so as nobody shan't be none the wiser, don't you know. Let us go in your room."

Elizabeth bundled Fayette up, and into the dim little room, hastily giving her a note. The moment they were safely inside Elizabeth shut the door, putting her back against it and laying a finger on her lip.

"The man said as 'ow you was to come along directly, without losing no time," she said.

Fayette tore open the note and tried to read, but the few words swam before her sight in a mist. Elizabeth watched her anxiously. In a few moments, she read the note. It merely said:

"Come at once. The mother-superior has the confession, but will give it to no one but yourself. Trust the messenger I send implicitly. I have telegraphed to your aunt, Miss Ibbotson. Yours,  
G. ARUNDRELL."

Fayette caught up her hat and a wrap, as well as a small travelling bag containing her few treasures.

"Can we get out of the house without being seen?" she tremulously asked.

"Lor bless yer, miss, yes. Come along, quick. This yere's a bit of a lark, and no mistake," said Elizabeth, who appeared to immensely enjoy the affair. "Don't make more noise than you can't help. Come along, do."

She fleetly led the way, stepping as lightly as she could, but raising terrible echoes with her new, strong, squeaky boots. At every turn of the stairs she glanced back to see if Fayette was following. As they passed Margaret's door Fayette stopped for a moment, her nervous imagination almost making her believe that she saw the door opening.

Elizabeth would not allow her to hesitate as they stood outside the street, but hurried her along. Mr. Arundell's messenger was waiting on the opposite side; he merely lifted his finger as a signal to Elizabeth, and hastened on. The two girls swiftly followed. When he turned down the first side street he stopped, to let them join him. He paused beside a cab, obviously in waiting. The moment the fugitives

reached him he opened the door quickly, and signed for them to get in.

"Has—has—have you any further message for me?" asked Fayette, in an almost inaudible voice.

"No, madam," replied the man, touching his hat respectfully. Then he shut the door, mounted beside the driver, and told the man to drive quickly away.

"Lor, well, I never," said Elizabeth, rapturously. "Well, if this ain't a real good joke—blest if it ain't. Won't some of the folks be surprised, and no mistake, and shan't I have to tell a few crammers—my! I never did come near the likes on it."

She rubbed her hands gleefully. Fayette's thoughts were far, far away, however. But the chief thought was an intense yearning to know what Mr. Arundell had to tell her.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### LADY ALLENBY.

It had been considered necessary to hold an inquest on the late Sir Hubert Allenby, but it was scarcely more than a matter of form. The funeral had taken place on a scale of subdued splendour. Many of the neighbouring gentry had attended it, and much sympathy had been expressed for the young daughter, the only child, so suddenly bereft of her father.

Sir Gerald had, of course, played the part of chief mourner. His face was as gloomy, his manner as abstracted, as if he had deeply loved his nephew. As yet, no one knew the exact position he occupied, and his personal beauty, the grace and urbanity of his manners, won him golden opinions from those who knew nothing about him.

The courtesy shown him, the obvious desire to cultivate his acquaintance, were as gall and wormwood to the disappointed man. How savagely he hated the girl who stood between him and a splendid inheritance! how gladly he would have slain her.

With quiet contempt, Beattie watched his attempts to regain her favour. She did not know why he so studiously avoided Miss Rochester, though her quick woman's wit enabled her to guess pretty shrewdly at the real state of affairs.

Lady Allenby, too late, saw the error she had herself committed in treating her young step-daughter so slightly. It was with difficulty that she lowered her pride and restrained her spleen so far as to admit of paying court to Beattie. She learnt with disappointed rage of Miss Rochester's engagement, and now tried to make an effort at laying siege to Miss Allenby as a wealthy match for her son, Eric. Her son was the only human being for whom she cared, and sometimes she was out of temper even with him.

The guests departed as soon as possible. None felt much inclination to cultivate the acquaintance of the widow, and Miss Allenby was as yet too young, and in too uncertain a position, to play hostess. Sir Gerald was in a sullen fury. It was unnecessary to hear what Mr. Fielding had to say, as far as he was concerned, so he left the house for a lonely ride. Mr. Fielding had not much to say to anyone. He repeated to Lady Allenby what he had already told her: that she had no claim to anything beyond her jointure, which shut her out from any other share.

"My own money, too," almost sobbed Lady Allenby. "Beattie, my child, you will not see me thus half-robbled? Out of so large a fortune you could surely spare a little to your poor father's wife?"

Beattie sat in stern silence. But she was relieved from the embarrassing necessity of replying by Mr. Fielding.

"I may as well inform you, madam," he said, coldly, "that it is not in Miss Allenby's power to part with a sixpence out of the estate. She is not of age; she can sign nothing—her promise would be legally null and void for three years to come. Therefore it is useless to ask for any-

thing. I am taking steps to have her made a ward in Chancery. You will only waste your time, then, if you seek to persuade her to any course whatever."

Lady Allenby stiffened herself until she appeared like one frozen into stone. There was nothing to be said, but she could have abused both the polite old solicitor and her beautiful step-daughter as fiercely as any fish-wife in Billingsgate had she dared. But furious as she felt towards these two hated persons, she was equally enraged against herself for not having paid court to Beattie instead of slighting her.

Full well she knew that if Beattie had chosen to express a wish for her to stay at Altham everyone would have gladly agreed. She could have reigned as absolute mistress for a couple of years at least; she could have exercised a subtle influence in preventing the young girl's marriage, and possibly ended in bringing about a match between this wealthy heiress and Eric.

But now she felt the antagonism of feeling to be so great that it was hopeless to think of dwelling under the same roof in any kind of peace. One glance at Beattie's cold face told her of the strong resentment that filled the girlish heart. Mr. Fielding's words showed her the inutilty of trying to carry the siege by storm, and she could not lower her pride, nor abate her unworthy dislike, sufficiently to make slow advances. Forgetting for a moment everything but her own angry thoughts, she rose, and stamped her foot passionately. Mr. Fielding also rose, cold and impassable.

"It is useless for me to say anything more," cried her ladyship, bitterly. "There is nothing but injustice to one so helpless as I am. I need expect no sympathy, no kindly feeling. I wish I had never seen or heard of this place, or of the people to whom it belongs; I do not intend to remain here." Mr. Fielding bowed. "It is a cruel, cruel world," she continued, her voice rising to a subdued scream. "There is no pity, no friendship, no kindness to be found. You may waste your health, your strength, your affections, and what thanks do you receive? None—none. I shall go from this place, my sole regret that I ever came within its walls."

Her ladyship was about to cast a look of withering scorn upon Miss Allenby, whom she apparently regarded as the author of all her misfortunes; but second thoughts quickly advised her to restrain any violent demonstration of hatred. She therefore raised her eyes with angelic meekness to the ceiling, where some painted angels and other spiritual beings smiled benevolently, either from habit or in pitying response; then she lowered her splendid black eyelashes, and contemplated the waxed oak flooring, and finally, at a loss what to say, swept herself and her serpentine crape train from the scene with the aspect of a deposed queen. Beattie laid her tremulous little hand on Mr. Fielding's arm and looked pleadingly at him.

(To be Continued.)

THE most dread foes of our older civilisation soon assert their power in new countries. In the Australian colony of Victoria consumption is now the most fatal of all diseases and the death-rate among its victims is steadily increasing, while typhoid fever carries off more persons there annually than it does in England and Wales.

THREE Members of Parliament have just introduced a Bill to amend the law of the hours of marriage. It is proposed that from the time of its enactment marriages may be solemnised at any time between the hours of eight of the clock in the forenoon and six of the clock in the afternoon; but no parson, vicar, minister, or curate of the Church of England shall be under any obligation to solemnise any marriage after twelve of the clock (noon), although it shall be lawful for any such parson, vicar, minister, or curate to do so, if he think so, up to six of the clock.



[REST AT LAST.]

## WHAT SOME HAVE FOUND SO SWEET.

THE last red sparkle of the fading sunset shone dimly in through the open shutters and fell upon the slender, black-robed figure at the piano. The small, dingy room was filled with an exquisite voice, and all nature seemed sinking to repose under its soft influence.

Outside the breeze was laden with the fragrant breath of spring; the birds had ceased to sing in the trees, and afar off the only sound borne on the air was the lowing of the cattle being driven home across the fields.

But the girl at the piano seemed oblivious to the quiet beauty of the June twilight, and an absorbed expression shone in the lovely brown eyes as up and down the scale her slender, pink-tipped fingers swiftly glided striking the chords with a masterly touch.

Suddenly the blinds, which opened outward on the long, low gallery, were thrown open, and a handsome, though dissipated-looking, young fellow entered the room. Instantly the music died away, the girl rose to her feet, tall, slender and in the fair cheeks the color fluttered tremulously. The brown eyes deepened a trifle as she recognised him, and the shapely head, with its wealth of glossy brown hair, was lifted haughtily.

"Philip! You here?"

The young man advanced a step, holding out his hand.

"I, Mertie. And why not?"

"Did you not receive my note?" she said, in a constrained tone, turning very white. "I sent you a message never to come here again. All is at an end between us, Philip. Nothing you can say will make me alter my resolution, and it is better for both if we never meet again."

A darkened look crossed his face, his hands were tightly clenched, and when he spoke again his voice was rather unsteady.

"Mertie, forgive me. I did not believe that you had seen me—that morning."

"I saw you," the girl returned, speaking rapidly, as though she dared not trust her voice. "I was not alone. Mother grew worse about dawn; Ruth consented to stay with her while Polly went with me to the physician's. As we hastened past Sloan's tavern you came out, accompanied by several others, singing low songs, and staggering in a way that told plainly enough that you and your companions were tipsy. I was shocked—more, I was horrified, and hurried on to avoid meeting you. If you were the last man on this broad earth I tell you, Philip," she added, passionately, "I would prefer to die a thousand deaths rather than become your wife. Drink was my father's curse, and he died a drunkard's death, and my future life shall never be made a slow torture by a drunken husband. I told you all this before,

and you promised to do better in future, but now—"

She broke down with something that sounded like a sob.

He turned to the window, a flush of remorse and shame on his handsome face. The breeze wafted the mellow fragrance from the garden into the bare, dingy-looking little room which served as a parlour in the brown cottage. Nature looked inviting, and the world seemed bright and gay enough, but his heart was desolate and sad.

She stood leaning heavily against that relic of other and brighter times, the piano, tall, weary, sorrow-stricken, watching him with wistful and tired eyes. She had forgiven him his besetting fault twice, thrice, already, and he had promised to mend; but after that spectacle, that proof of his fickleness, seen by the vague, uncertain light of early dawn, she felt she could never trust him again. Suddenly he turned and caught both her hands in an impassioned clasp.

"Mertie, pardon me once more," he pleaded. "I swear—"

She snatched her hands away with a swift gesture of contempt that pierced his heart like hot iron.

"Oh, leave me—leave me! Why will you prolong my misery by staying here?"

"You send me away like this?" he said, with a hard laugh. "Will nothing move you, Mertie?"

"Nothing—nothing!"

He saw her shrinking away from him so visibly. Then he sprang forward and clasped her in one passionate embrace, raining hot kisses on the crimson lips. While she struggled madly to free herself he released her, whispering in her ear:

"Farewell, sweetheart. Some day I shall return worthy of even your forgiveness. You are cruel, but I know I deserve it. Sweetheart, good-bye—good-bye!"

It was maddening—maddening to stand there and hear him she loved so well say that last farewell—maddening to hear his footsteps down the gravel walk ring an echo of loss and unutterable dreariness from her sorrowing heart. She loved him best of all the world, but his vice was stronger than his will, and she must stand by those principles which were the guide-posts of her life.

The burden of affliction had fallen early and heavily on her shoulders, pain and want were a part of her existence, and this new, sore affliction she must take up and bear patiently, even cheerfully.

She never doubted that she had acted for the best in breaking her engagement with Philip Graham. Had he really loved her, he would not have found it so hard to resign those doubtful pleasures to be found only in the grog shops.

She stood there in the darkened room, while the twilight deepened into night and the white stars came and peeped curiously at the slender, silent figure, with her face bowed in her hands, and suffering untold anguish, while the gentle breeze murmured playfully among the trees, and only the shrill cry of some night-bird breaking the stillness—stood there with all her barren, loveless life rising like a phantom to mock her grief, knowing that her own hand had dashed away the cup of elysium. She would not, even if she could, have called him back to her side again.

Existence in the brown cottage dragged on very slowly and painfully; days slipped into months, but Mertie Fleming heard no more of her lover. Her little school in Clifton prospered, but as time passed her invalid mother began slowly to fail in both mind and body.

Her sister Ruth, with her two small children, who was daily expecting to receive word to join her husband—who had gone to another part of the country to prepare a home for her—was of but little assistance in contributing towards their support. Always fretful and repining, it



was almost a relief to Mertie when the summons did come for Mrs. Lane to join her husband.

That was the only event which broke the dull, deadly monotony of her life. The Clifdon people were always kind, but they were for the most part rough, uncongenial companions to this city-born and bred girl whom Fate had destined to preside over their village school, and work out the problem of her life in this out-of-the-way village.

When her duties for the day were done it was not an unusual thing to see the tall, willowy figure of the young schoolmistress walking slowly and sedately on the grassy border of the dusty road, bowing with grave courtesy to the farmers whom she chanced to meet; and perchance some robust young farmer, with faltering voice, and cheeks flushing a deeper tint than was their wont, would ask permission to see her safely home, but always the request was kindly yet firmly refused.

So the time passed; rain or shine found Mertie attending faithfully to her duties. Polly, the servant girl, took care of her invalid mother during her absence, and as the spring gave place to summer, the bitter pain of her loss ceased to rankle so deeply in her heart.

But when the snow was lying deep on the ground, and ere the Christmas tide had come with its merry cheer, Mertie was called on to mourn the loss of her mother. It was now a year since Philip had gone. Miss Fleming still lived with Polly at the brown cottage; but the schoolhouse in which she taught was an old one, and was fast falling to decay.

The school committee held a special meeting to consider the expediency of erecting a new house. It was decided to give a sacred concert in aid of the project, Mertie was asked to sing, and, though deprecating her own powers, she readily consented.

The concert was a great success. The day following the musical critic of the village, a Mr. Byrnes, a musician of ability, called on the schoolmistress. Mertie listened in great surprise to the proposal he had come to make. She considered the step carefully he asked her to take, then, to his delight, she accepted.

Suddenly she resigned her position, and, accompanied by Mr. Byrnes, she left Clifdon, and the people and the place that knew her once knew her no more. After a year's hard study, in which Mertie gave herself completely up to her new avocation, she made her debut in London, and awoke one morning and found herself famous.

The men were wild about her grace and beauty,  
The women hated her with one accord.

That winter she sang to crowded houses in the principal cities. Then another calamity. Her friend and manager, Mr. Byrnes, died after a short illness. The prima donna was now quite alone in the world, for from her sister she had heard nothing since her departure. The beautiful face had grown sad, and a wistful look shone in her lovely brown eyes, which somehow had a watchful, roving glance, as though seeking something which never came.

Filled with a vague unrest she crossed the ocean, and for two years enchanted America, and all the papers were filled with descriptions of the lovely English girl who had carried the country by storm.

Tired out and sick with longing to again behold her native land, she returned to England and began a paying engagement in London. In all this time she heard nothing of Philip or her sister, but one day a letter came, and she threw up her engagement and by the next train was travelling north.

The letter was from her sister, who was living in a place called Galveston, ill and poor, and with three children dependent upon her. She had heard of Mertie's wonderful prosperity, and wrote in the faint hope that the letter would safely reach its destination.

Miss Fleming read the sorrowful tale written, which began with glowing hopes for a bright future, but finally ended in poverty, privation, and death of the husband and father, and a new

hope entered her heart. Now she had something to love and live for.

She bought a pretty home for her sister in the suburbs of the city, where the sea breeze always blew, and the blue, foamy waters of the gulf could be seen rolling up the broad, shelly beach which was at once the pride and pleasure of that city by the sea.

In this cosy retreat, shut out from the noise of city life by long rows of oleander and dwarf cedar trees, she settled down to enjoy a period of peace and quiet. Yet somehow she was possessed of a strange unrest. An offer was made her by a manager in Liverpool, and one day she flitted off, and for a whole month charmed the denizens of that city.

After that she went on a starring tour through the south. Wherever she appeared her fame had preceded her, and honours and encomiums were lavished upon her. In the springtime she returned to Galveston to pass the heated term. One rainy day Mertie was seated at the piano playing after her usual absorbed fashion.

Mrs. Lane was looking over the morning paper in a distant bay window. Suddenly she called her sister, and Mertie left the instrument and hastened to her side. Mrs. Lane handed her the paper, quietly pointing to a short paragraph. She glanced at the article carelessly, then her heart seemed to be grasped in a hand of iron.

"DIED—On board the ship 'Union,' bound from Boston to Liverpool, John Philip Graham, Protestant Episcopal Missionary to India, aged twenty-seven years."

And so this was the end. She had sent him away, and nobly had he redeemed the errors of his youth; but now he was lost to her for ever. Mrs. Lane softly left the room, and once more Mertie stood face to face with life's sorrow; it was better that she should know the worst than be always hoping for that which would never come. Mertie bowed her head in mute anguish, then she fell down on her knees by the window, her face buried in her hands, and her form shaking with suppressed sobs.

"Oh, Heaven!" she wept, in her bitter grief, my punishment is greater than I can bear."

All these weary years the hope had sustained her that Philip would come back to her; but now she must weep over dead sea fruit. The world, after its usual presumptuous fashion, wondered that the beautiful singer went no more into society; but for the world and its wonder Miss Fleming cared less than nothing.

Her London manager repeatedly urged her not to absent herself longer from the stage, and after a tiresome correspondence on the subject, she decided to go on after the Christmas holidays, but until that time she must be left alone to quiet and rest in the place where the news of Philip's death first reached her.

It was the Sabbath day—a lovely, sunny, breezy morning late in June. Upon the white, shelly sands, that seemed to glisten for very joy, the blue sea waves rolled with a sound like distant music; the tall oleanders were laden with the clustering flowers which filled the air with a rare, bewildering perfume, while through all the Sabbath loveliness sounded the mellow, sweet, rich tones of the church-bells.

Eleven was the hour as chimed by the city clock. On the beach, at the line where the tide came rolling caressingly up to her dainty shoes, and gazing out over the stretch of gleaming waters where the stately ships rode at anchor, with her face radiant with joy, stood little Lula Lane, one hand shading her eyes, and a prayer-book in the other.

She might have stayed for church and gone home in the carriage with her mother, but she preferred to take a street-car and came home by way of the beach, taking her own time to that end.

Running along the yellow sands, picking up the pearly shells as they caught her fancy, and laughing gleefully when the waves dashed treacherously near her satin shoes, Lula finally

stumbling over a black object, which she had not perceived, lying in her path.

She fell headlong, with a cry of fright and pain, for the object she had fallen over was a man, half buried in the sand, while a little stream of crimson, from a deep gash in the head, stained the sand near him. After the first shock Lula approached as near as she dared to the dreadful thing, albeit she was a brave little girl, remarkably cool and decisive of character for one of her years.

The appearance of a horse browsing the stubble a short distance away, a broken bit dangling from his mouth, proved conclusively enough that the rider had been thrown. There was no house nearer than her own home, which was full a mile distant, except a small cabin occupied by an old man, known as Uncle Jake, and his wife and son.

It did not take Lula long to reach the cabin, and in a short space of time the stranger was conveyed thither by the old man and his son, and lodged in the best room the house afforded. Lula lingered near the door after she had seen him carried in, and presently old Jake came out.

"Is he dead, Uncle Jake?" asked Lula, apprehensive lest the answer should be in the affirmative.

"No," he said, shaking his grey head solemnly, "but he is mighty close there—mighty close, Miss Lula."

"Well," she said, opening and shutting her prayer-book nervously, "I'll come over after dinner and bring the gentleman something nice."

That evening Lula did visit the cabin, carrying a plate of strawberries and cream, with a huge slice of cake in her lunch basket. She had told her mother of her adventure in the morning, and Mrs. Lane promised to go and see the wounded man on the following day, and with her own hands arranged Lula's basket. The gentleman was quite delicious, and through the open door she caught a glimpse of the tall figure on the bed.

He was very handsome, and his white, moustached lips were muttering incoherently; but all that Lula could hear was a name which sounded like "Mertie," and something about Indians and missionaries. His coat was thrown across a chair, and she noticed that it resembled a clerical garment, while his face wore a patient austere expression. She thought he looked very much like a minister.

The next day Mrs. Lane herself was too ill to venture out, but Lula stopped at the cabin on her way from school that afternoon, and found the gentleman much better. A week later he was convalescing rapidly.

From Jake he learned that to the little girl he very probably owed his life, and one afternoon he took her on his knee and questioned her about herself. Lula artlessly told him not only her own trifling affairs, but related the whole family history, or as much as she knew, to which Mr. Phillips, as she had learned to call him, listened with an amused smile till she mentioned "Aunt Mertie," when he gave a great start of surprise, and inquired who was Aunt Mertie.

"Aunt Mertie?" said Lula, opening her eyes in wonder, "why, I thought everybody knew Aunt Mertie."

"But you forget," he said, gently, "that I've been away from England for years."

"It was a long time ago," she explained, a touch of pathos in the childish voice, "and we were so poor—so poor. Once, when mamma was afraid that we would be turned out to starve in the street, she prayed all night that the good Father would help us, and the next day Aunt Mertie came. Oh, she was a great lady, and had lots of money! Everybody loved her because she sang so nicely. When she saw mamma she just took her in her arms and cried so much over her that she spoiled her dress. But mamma didn't mind that, she was so happy, and after awhile we moved into our home, and now we'll never starve any more. It's just like a fairy tale."

"Just like a fairy tale," he assented, smiling

down upon the pathetic young face. "And what is our good fairy godmother's other name? She has another name, I suppose, hasn't she?"

"Yes, Fleming," Lula answered. "Aunt Mertie Fleming. That's it."

After that, Mr. Phillips grew very silent and absorbed, and long after Lula had gone home he walked up and down the grassy plot in front of the cabin far into the lovely June night, with the moonlight flooding the fields and lying pale and silvery on the sparkling waters of the gulf, and the perfume of the oleanders all around him, thinking of that parting of five years ago on just such a night.

Should he go to her now, throw himself at her feet, and plead once more to be forgiven? How his very soul yearned for her! How he longed to gaze once more into the depths of those lovely brown eyes! And yet, in all these years, was it not possible that she had formed new ties? Was not the old love forgotten, and classed among the dreams of "auld lang syne?"

Slowly in his heart grew the resolve that he would never seek her till she should acknowledge that the past was redeemed, and that he was worthy the boon he had cherished in the weary days in far off India, when the thought of the girl at home had alone given him power against that fever which desolated whole provinces, and gave him fame as a missionary through all the land.

When Lula next visited the cabin Mr. Phillips lifted her to his knee and stroked her fair hair caressingly. It was marvellous, the bond that suddenly seemed to spring up between the child and this ecclesiastical-looking stranger, who preferred the poor cabin to the comforts of the best hotels in the city.

True, the physician who was first called in to attend him had suggested his removal, on learning that his patient was a gentleman of means; but Mr. Phillips showed no disposition for a change, only saying, in his serene, merry way, that he was used to cabin life, and that he could not think of relinquishing the society of the little girl who had saved his life.

Wonderful stories he had told her of distant lands inhabited by a strange, fierce people who had been subdued by the coming of God's Word among them, and that from being at eternal warfare with their neighbours they had become a thrifty, peaceable people. After they had chatted awhile he drew a note from his pocket, sealed, and addressed simply "Mrs. Lane," and gave it to Lula.

"Lula," he said, earnestly. "I am going away very soon, but I wanted to thank your mamma and tell her what a dear little girl her daughter is; and this," he added, throwing around the neck of the child a beautiful necklace of coral, "I want you to keep always, in memory of the day you saved my life."

Mrs. Lane was standing on the gallery when Lula reached home with a very sober look on her face. She stooped to kiss her daughter as Lula paused beside her.

"My dear," she said, gently, "you are very late from school this evening. I wanted you to go with me for a drive on the beach."

"I stopped to see Mr. Phillips, mamma," the child answered, clearly. "He's going away, and he gave me this note to give you."

Mrs. Lane took the note, glanced at the unfamiliar superscription, then tore it open. This is what she read:

"DEAR MRS. LANE,—

"If an old friend has still any claim on your regard, and if not for the sake of old times, then for the sake of your little daughter who saved my life, I beg of you to grant me the privilege of a private interview.

"Yours truly, "PHILIP GRAHAM."

Profoundest astonishment filled Mrs. Lane as she read these few lines. Philip Graham alive and well, and so very near them. And Mertie? How would she take this great and overwhelming surprise? She glanced at her sister, who was seated in an easy chair at the farther end of the gallery. Mertie's health was none of the

best, and it would never do to break the tidings of Philip's safe return too suddenly.

Lula was standing beside her, and they were evidently engaged in earnest conversation. Mertie had heard of Mr. Phillips, as his praises were constantly rung by Lula, who now came to tell her that he was going away. She smiled at the child's enthusiastic friendship for the stranger, but somehow there was a deep pang in her heart every time his name was mentioned. It sounded so familiar, and carried her back to that twilight parting five years ago, and the bitter pain of that parting would never vanish from her heart.

When the sun arose on another day, and after she had seen her children safely off to school, Mrs. Lane slipped from the house and went across the grassy fields to old Jake's habitation. As she turned the lane that led to the house she came face to face with the object of her visit. She knew the tall, manly figure and bronzed, handsome face instantly. Two smiling dark eyes met her look of recognition with an answering glance, and she felt her hands clasped in those of Philip Graham.

"You are very kind to come," he said. "I half feared that you had forgotten me."

"Do you know that we have mourned you as dead?" Mrs. Lane replied. "We never heard one word about you till we saw the notice of your death in the papers. Don't you think it was very cruel in you to let my sister remain in ignorance of your whereabouts these past five years?"

"I dared not hope," he interrupted, and there was a tremor in the strong voice, "that she still cared for me. I stayed away till I could stay no longer, and when I arrived at the old place you were all gone, no one knew whither. After that I think I lost all hope of finding you, and I resolved to settle here. Riding on the beach one Sabbath morn I was thrown from my horse, and your little daughter found me. The rest you know; but I had determined that Mertie should never look upon my face until I was worthy her love and confidence. Has she not put all thoughts of one who proved herself so unworthy her trust far from her heart? Oh, Mrs. Lane, can I go back even now? If I might still believe that she still loves me—"

"I think you may," Mrs. Lane said, gently. "only the tidings must not be broken too suddenly. Her happiness is very dear to me, and the news of your safe return might be too much for her."

"I will trust you to break the tidings to her," he said, his voice quite broken. "To-morrow I go north to claim a large fortune left by my uncle, which has gone begging for heirs. I shall return at Christmas, and then—"

"I understand," she said, smiling through the tears that somehow would well up to her eyes.

"And then trust all to me. Mertie shall have her life's happiness yet."

Summer passed. Autumn waned into winter, and the holidays were fast drawing near. Grand preparations were going on in old Trinity to commemorate the birthday of the Saviour. Mrs. Lane and Miss Fleming, and other ladies of the congregation, for days had been busy decorating the church for the festival. Wreaths of flowers and evergreens were hung upon the walls and festooned the stained windows; the altar and font were lavishly covered with beautiful plants, while the trailing arbutus clung to the pillows, and was looped from one to the other in a continuous string.

But the music was to be something unusual. A great tenor had been engaged, and Miss Fleming, by special request of the pastor, was to sing with him a sacred duet.

Christmas Eve found everything ready for the grand festival, and on that day came a note from the pastor to inform her that the tenor had suddenly been called away from the city; another gentleman, however, would take his place, and he assured her that he was perfect in his part.

Christmas day dawned—a sunny, cool, bracing

day. It had been noised through the city that the beautiful prima donna would assist the choir on this occasion, and old Trinity was thronged by many who came to hear the famous voice.

Mertie arrived after the service had commenced looking pale and very lovely in a rustling black silk, with only a white ruffle at the exquisite throat to relieve the sombreness of her costume. She passed to her stand just as the organist played the prelude to the duet.

Like the sweet chiming of silver bells the two voices rose with the music and the church seemed filled with the wondrous melody. Now the music ceased, and Miss Fleming went on alone, chanting the solo till she awakened a response from the tenor, when her voice died away in ebbing floods of harmony, while the tenor sang of the grandest love one man ever bore to another—the grandest love this world ever knew.

People turned their heads in wonder to look at the singer. Mertie was surprised at the depth and pathos of that voice, and she could hardly restrain an impulse to glance at him; but she did restrain it, and kept her eyes steadily on her sheets, when suddenly came the conviction that she had heard that voice before somewhere.

Now she joined in, while the organ swept on in one undulating flood of melody; then the notes sank lower, to arise with a triumphant bound, now down, down, down, and the Christmas jubilee was over. The vast congregation listened in silent rapture. Someone, a little girl, left her seat and went lightly down the aisle, and sped up the vestibule stairs into the loft.

"Aunt Mertie, Aunt Mertie!" said Lula, pulling at Miss Fleming's dress, "this is the gentleman I found on the beach—this is Mr. Phillips."

Mertie glanced down at her niece, and then at the gentleman, and found two smiling dark eyes fixed on her. The next moment she grasped at the railing for support, while the church and all the people seemed swimming around as in a great mist.

A slight commotion among the startled members of the choir followed, then he raised his hand, and with the old smile on his lips that she remembered so well, made a step forward. Mertie was getting dizzy with every moment; the gallery on which they stood, it appeared to her, was waving upward to the ceiling—now she was losing her hold on all things earthly, falling, falling.

Graham caught her as she sank down limp and lifeless into his arms. This sudden climax had been no part of his intention, but Lula had brought on the catastrophe by her swift recognition of him. One or two ladies of the choir followed to render assistance, but Mrs. Lane met them at the bottom of the stairs, and at her brief orders Mertie was placed in the carriage.

"You will come?" she said, questioningly, to Graham, and without a word he took his seat beside the unconscious girl.

Sunny and warm was the drawing-room when Miss Fleming recovered from her swoon. She opened her eyes with a long-drawn sigh, and glanced languidly around. Mrs. Lane was bending over her.

"Where is Philip?" she murmured, restlessly. "I thought my Philip had come for me."

The door opened and a gentleman entered. "Here is Philip," said Mrs. Lane, hardly able to keep back her tears, and with her usual tact, quietly leaving the room.

Graham came forward, knelt down beside the sofa, and gathered her in his arms, raining passionate kisses on the beautiful face into which the colour was slowly returning.

"Oh, Philip," she said, and there were tears in the sweet voice. "Is it you, really truly? Have you come back from the grave to tell me that you forgive me for sending you away? But oh! my love, if you knew what I, too, have



suffered in all these bitter years, you surely would forgive me!"

"I have nothing to forgive," he answered, with a great tenderness. "You performed your duty nobly. That about the obituary notice was a case of mistaken identity."

Like the dawn of a new life the Christmas sun shone in bright and warm, giving promise of a bright future, while through the open window came the merry laughter and prattle of children on the lawn. In this supreme hour of her happiness, Mertie gave way utterly.

"At last, at last!" she murmured, brokenly. "Oh, love, it is so good to be with you again!"

For answer he drew her closer in his arms, and she laid her face against his shoulder with a tired sigh, knowing that at last her life had found "what some have found so sweet."

A. U.

## FACETIÆ.

"PAY"—LUCID.

THE: "Terry, me bouchal, are ye going to pay the rint?"

TERRY: "Sorra one o' me knows! If I don't pay they'll make me pay, an' if I do pay there'll be the devil to pay; so I'd best just wait the course of evints."

THE: "An' wot's that, thin?"

TERRY: "It's wot the gentleman said at the meeting."

—Fun.

"OH, WHAT A GLORIOUS NIGHT TO SEE."

OLD GEORGE (to successful county candidate): "Well, Master Charles, to think o' you bein' a Parliament gentleman! Danged if I shan't go up to Lannon myself an' pay a shillun' to see you a'-settin' there along o' the royal family. There!"

—Fun.

WICKEDNESS.

A WICKED wag, writing to Mrs. J., asks her, above all people in the world, too! a riddle, and in case that, as he says, she may never guess it, encloses the answer to it. This is the riddle:—"What is the difference between parsons and poultry?—Why, the one is clerical, the other—lay."

—Jud.

LOGIC.

ADJUTANT (to newly-joined recruit, who presents himself): "Well, my man, what's your business?"

RECRUIT: "Shure now, if I knew what I wanted, should I be aither asking you, sorr?"

—Jud.

CHOICE OF EVILS.

(Duckwidge and Pottles meet. Many years had passed since they were at school and college together. Duckwidge invites Pottles to dinner "in a quiet way.")

DUCKWIDGE: "Now what will you drink, Pottles? We have here some"—(holding decanter against the light)—"yes, this is 'East London'—that by you, I think, is 'New River.' Perhaps you take sparkling—" (to serving maid)—"Mary, did you bring up the seltzer and apoll—" (Pottles gesticulates dissent.) "No? Well, I assure you you'll find that 'New River' an exceedingly pleasant—ah—water!"

"By heavens," as Pottles said at the club that night, "the man was an irreconcilable Law-sonite!"

—Punch.

RIVALS IN SOCIAL SUCCESS.

SCENE: Staircase of ducal mansion. The duchess at home. "Small and early."

Mrs. JONES (a new beauty, with more surprise than pleasure): "Well, I never! Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, of all people! And how came you here?"

Mrs. ROBINSON (a still newer beauty): "We drove, dear Mrs. Jones. You don't mean to say you came on foot!"

—Punch.

LIGHTS! MEOW! LIGHTS!

(In Downing-street, when the Premier entertained the P. of W. at dinner, there was a

brilliant crown and other designs, but none save the guests were allowed in the street to see them.)

"Those lovely lights, those lovely lights, How relishing on birthday nights! Policeman, let us in 'ere."

"No, no; stand back. You're not allowed. Such dainty lights ain't for the crowd;

They're for the folks at dinner."

—Funny Folks.

THE REWARD OF INGENUITY.

WHY is a certain young draper's establishment so crowded? Simply because he has hit on a happy expedient. He answers every lady's advertisement in the matrimonial papers, and, under many aliases, making appointments at his shop, where each lady buys something as a pretext for waiting for the expected somebody who never comes.

—Funny Folks.

THE MONSTER!

AUNT (reading): "There is so little room in the House that Members will have to sit on each other's knees."

NEPHEW: "Oh, crikey! Won't the women try to get into Parliament now!"

—Funny Folks.

## ONLY A DAISY.

ONLY a little flower gathered long years ago,

Once pure and fair in a maiden's hair,

Has set my heart aglow;

Found in a book 'mid its faded leaves O'er memories past, deep shadows cast, My heart still grieves.

Found in a book once pure and white, Thoughts wander back on life's long track

To one fair night; Remembrance sweet—oh, stolen flower—

Stole with a kiss in youth and bliss One happy hour.

The sweet stars shone so bright above, But not so sweet as eyes that meet My looks of love.

Oh, happy night—oh, daisy fair, A vision bright still meets my sight Beyond compare.

I close the book, the sweet glow fades From out my heart until we meet no more to part

In fairer glades.

O. P.

## STATISTICS.

POSTAGE STAMPS.—The number of different kinds of postage stamps which have been hitherto issued all over the world is estimated, in round numbers, at 6,000. Among them are to be found the effigies of five emperors, eighteen kings, three queens, one grand duke, six princes, one princess, and a great number of presidents, &c. Some of the stamps bear coats-of-arms and other emblems, as crowns, the papal keys, and tiara, anchors, eagles, lions, horses, stars, serpents, railway trains, horsemen, messengers, &c. The collection preserved in the Museum of the Berlin Post Office included, on July 1, 1879, 4,408 specimens of different postage stamps. Of these 2,462 were from Europe, 441 from Asia, 251 from Africa, 1,143 from America, and 201 from Australia.

JUDGES at baby-shows in Kentucky wear masks. It saves unpleasantness after the prizes have been awarded.

## HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GINGER BEER.—Put the thinly-peeled rind of four lemons into a large earthen pan with the strained juice, two ounces of bruised ginger, two and a half pounds of loaf sugar, and half an ounce of cream of tartar. Pour over these ingredients two and a half gallons of boiling water, and, when lukewarm, add two table-spoonfuls of fresh brewer's yeast. Stir the liquor, and leave it to ferment until the next day. Skim the yeast from the top, pour the beer carefully from the sediment, and bottle for use. The corks should be perfectly sound, put into boiling water just before being used, and then securely wired down. The ginger beer will be ready for use in two days. Probable cost, 1s. 10d. Sufficient for three dozen and a half ginger beer bottles.

LEMONADE, EFFERVESCING.—Boil two pounds of loaf sugar in a pint of strained lemon-juice until the sugar is dissolved. Pour the syrup out, and when it is cold put in the bottles, and cork closely. When wanted for use, put a table-spoonful into a tumbler three-parts full of cold water. Stir in briskly twenty grains of carbonate of soda, and drink during effervescence. Probable cost 2s. 6d. Sufficient for a little more than a quart of syrup.

LEMONADE.—Boil a quart of water with three-quarters of a pound of loaf sugar, and pour the syrup over the rind of six lemons. Let them soak for two or three hours. Add the strained juice of the lemons and two quarts of water. Pass the whole through a jelly-bag and serve in glass jugs. Probable cost, 10d. Sufficient for seven pints of lemonade.

MUSTARD AND CRESS FOR BREAKFAST.—The cress is an exceedingly wholesome herb, which from its pungent quality promotes and assists digestion. It is generally served in the centre of a dish, surrounded with white and red radishes. We would recommend for weak digestions the cress without the accompaniment. Put a small saltcellar in the centre of a plate, and serve the cress around it.

DESSERT ICE CURRANTS.—To the beaten whites of two eggs add a quarter of a pint of clear spring water, and mix them thoroughly together. Select some fine bunches of currants, red and white. Immerse each bunch separately in the mixture, and let them drip a minute, then roll them carefully in a quantity of finely-sifted sugar; let the rolling be repeated. Lay them with a space between each bunch on paper to dry and become crystallised.

PUFF PUDDING.—Beat six eggs, six spoonfuls of milk, six of flour, a good lump of butter, and bake quickly. Wina sauce is good with it.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

THE Admiralty have resolved to pay the widows of those who have been lost in the Atalanta a sum equal to a year's pay of their late husbands.

A SUPREME effort is being made this year to obtain the legalisation of marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The Bill, which has passed the House of Commons on several occasions, has been invariably thrown out by the House of Lords, but the opposition to the measure is annually growing feebler, and there is little doubt that the Bill will speedily become the law of the land. It will be remembered that the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh voted for the Bill last year, on which occasion the Prince said:—"My Lords,—I have to present a petition, signed by 3,258 farmers of Norfolk, praying for the legalisation of Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister. I present it, my Lords, on local and general grounds. It is my firm conviction that if this Bill passed it would be of advantage to the community at large, and I therefore give my hearty support to the noble lord who moves the second reading of the Bill."

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Y. F.—1. Light brown. 2. Use occasionally the following mixture: Olive oil, two ounces; tincture of cantharides, quarter of an ounce; oil of rosemary, thirty drops.

A. J. G.—1. Josselyn. 2. Head office, Dublin.  
ANNIE W.—It is your duty to make your parents acquainted with your clandestine engagement. Your future welfare and happiness are nearest to their hearts. Do not heed what "he says." Your parents will sift the corn from the chaff. If they think they may entrust their future happiness to the gentleman's keeping they will not oppose you. If they do not think so it is their duty to terminate the acquaintance.

WILLIAM.—Of all the remedies for thirst advertised, there is none better than what is known as Cooper's Effervescing Lozenges.

GEORGE.—You say you are only twenty years old. That being the case, it would not be proper or discreet for you to take any decided step in such a matter without first consulting your parents.

STANLEY.—The young lady who quarrelled with you so frequently about mere trifles, and seriously for being mixed up in an event over which you had no control, did not care much for you. Be rather glad that she has become the property of another man. Your married life, if you had made her your wife, would have been a most unhappy one.

JAMES R.—Macaroni is made by simply moistening flour and passing it through moulds; but it is said that Italian wheat, from which macaroni is made, causes it to assume the peculiar pipe-like form more readily than any other European wheat. Whether this be true or not, macaroni is most solely manufactured in Italy, where it forms the most common article of diet of all classes—nobles and lazzaroni, rich and poor. It is said that the Italians have several hundreds of different methods of cooking macaroni.

ADA W.—If he loves you he will not fail to evince his affection at the proper time. Although this is leap year, there is no necessity for you to "throw yourself at him." He seems to be a little slow, but sometimes the slow ones are the surest.

SAXON.—The name of England, commonly supposed to be a corruption of the word Angles, is in reality derived from a village near Sleswick, in Denmark, named Anglen, whose population were the first to join the Saxon freebooters in their invasion of Great Britain.

H. E. P.—It is not reading, but thinking, that gives you the possession of knowledge. A person may see, hear, read, and learn whatever he pleases, and as much as he pleases; but he will know very little, if anything, of it, beyond that which he has thought over, and made the property of his mind. Take away thought from the life of man, and what remains?

GEORGE.—You can get a tolerably reliable idea as to the state of your lungs by drawing in your breath and counting as long as you can hold it, carefully observing the number of seconds. In consumption the time will not exceed ten seconds, and is often less than six seconds, in pleurisy and pneumonia varying from nine to four. If your lungs are sound the time of counting will be as high as thirty seconds.

RICHARD E.—You forget that "there is nothing new under the sun." That among the Romans there were some, especially ladies, who wore false hair there is abundant evidence in the works of several of their poets, and it also appears, from an epigram from Martial (and probably from passages in other writers), that false teeth were not unknown, though it seems they had not arrived at the art of supplying the loss of an eye.

ANNIE L.—We should be leading you astray were we to advise you to adopt any advertiser's remedy to alter the ugly shape of your nose. Unfortunately for you, you must put up with what Nature has awarded you.

MATILDA F.—We believe it is customary to give a small douceur to the vergor on marriage by special license. The amount is quite in the giver's discretion.

EDWIN.—Black spots under the skin of the face are caused by a small insect. Remove them by the gradual pressure of the thumb-nails, or the hollow end of a lath-key, so as to bring away the root. Afterwards sponge with cold water.

HENRY, twenty-three, dark, of a loving disposition, dark hair and eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

P. G. E., twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, dark, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen, good-looking, tall, loving.

G. M. A. and W. E. H., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. G. M. A. is twenty-three, medium height, dark, loving, brown hair and eyes, fond of home and music. W. E. H. is twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of music and dancing, and loving.

GEORGIUS, twenty-four, brown hair, blue eyes, fond of music, a seaman in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen.

J. J. and Joe, two friends, wish to correspond with two young ladies. J. J. is twenty, good-looking, tall, fair. Joe is fair, fond of children brown hair. Respondents must be tall, fond of children, dark.

DANIEL, twenty-four, medium height, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be good-looking, fond of music, and of a loving disposition.

ADELINA, AMY, and EMILY, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen. Adeline is twenty-four, auburn hair, brown eyes, medium height, fair. Amy is twenty-one, brown hair, blue eyes, fair. Emily is eighteen, brown hair, hazel eyes, of a loving disposition, fair, medium height.

T. P. and R. J., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. T. P. is nineteen, fair, grey eyes. R. J. is twenty, dark, good-looking. Respondents must be fair, good-looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

## SWINGING IN THE BARN.

SUNSHINE everywhere,  
Flooding all the balmy air;  
Playing bo-peep with the rill,  
Laughing at the frowning hill,  
Making all things wondrous clear,  
And God seem so very near.

Up and down the hay-straw floor,  
In an out the open door,  
Comes a rush of little feet,  
And a burst of laughter sweet,  
Making doubly fair this world,  
Where our life-flame are unfurled.

Swallows twitter as they fly  
Up to nests where frail young lie,  
Hid secure near moss-green eaves  
O'er which summer throws her leaves.  
Their wee hearts feel no alarm  
At the swinging in the barn.

In and out they skim along,  
Never falt'ring in their song,  
And the children's boyish laughter  
Circles round each beam and rafter,  
While the white-capped clover-bloom  
Lends to all its sweet perfume.

There's a veil of golden hair  
Streaming backward on the air;  
Two wee feet now touch the breach  
They have tried so hard to reach,  
And I hear a shout of glee  
At the longed-for victory.

Ah, my heart, this life is short;  
Hours of joy with grief are fraught.  
Breathe a prayer while yet you may  
For fair childhood's tender day,  
When, without a thought of harm,  
There is swinging in the barn. M. O.

CONSTANCE and HELEN, two friends, would like to correspond with two gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Constance is twenty-one, of a loving disposition, fond of home, domesticated, tall, fair. Helen is nineteen, loving, tall, fond of home and children.

ALICE S., twenty-one, fond of home and children, dark, would like to correspond with a mechanic about twenty-four.

CUTTER, PUNT, and PAINTER, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies. Cutter is twenty-three, good-looking, hazel eyes, dark, fond of music. Punt is twenty-two, blue eyes, medium height, dark, fond of dancing. Painter is twenty-one, fond of children, hazel eyes, dark.

CUTTING SPICE and TOPMASTHEAD, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. Cutting Spice is twenty-two, good-looking, fair, fond of music, medium height. Topmasthead is twenty-three, medium height, hazel eyes, dark, of a loving disposition.

VIOLA and HARRIET, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Viola is twenty-one, good-looking, tall, fond of music and dancing. Harriet is twenty, fond of home and children, domesticated, tall.

TORTIE and NELLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Tortie is nineteen, fair, fond of home and music. Nelly is nineteen, fair, tall, fond of home and music. Respondents must be about twenty, dark.

D. B. and W. G., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies. D. B. is twenty-five, fair, medium height, of a loving disposition, good-looking, fond of music. W. G. is twenty-three, fair, medium height.

L. C., nineteen, tall, good-tempered, fair, wishes to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy with a view to matrimony.

EDMUND, twenty-one, grey eyes, dark, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Respondent must be about nineteen, good-looking, and loving.

CISSEY and AMELIA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Cissey is twenty-five, brown hair, dark eyes. Amelia is fair, hazel eyes, good-looking, fond of music. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-six, fond of home, steady.

CLAUDE J., nineteen, tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady.

WILLIAM, forty, would like to correspond with a widow with means with a view to matrimony.

DORA, NETTIE, and CLARA, three friends, would like to correspond with three tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Dora is nineteen, good-looking, medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home and children. Nettie is twenty, fond of home and music, tall, fair. Clara is twenty-two, dark, good-looking, medium height, fond of home and music.

RICARDO, nineteen, tall, dark, of a loving disposition, and fond of music, would like to correspond with a young lady about eighteen.

LOWER DECK and STEWARD, two seamen in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. Lower Deck is twenty-two, fair, auburn hair, light blue eyes, of a loving disposition. Steward is twenty-four, dark, brown hair and eyes, and loving.

ADA and NETTIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young men. Ada is twenty-three, fair, fond of home. Nettie is twenty-one, dark, thoroughly domesticated.

WILLIAM, twenty-four, handsome, dark, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about the same age, light hair, fair, medium height.

CASSIE, seventeen, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty-one, tall, good-looking, fair.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

JACK is responded to by—Bianca, twenty-two, dark, hazel eyes, good-looking, tall.

JAMES by—E. W., fair, blue eyes, fond of home and children, medium height.

ROBERT by—Kate, of medium height, fair, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home and children, of a loving disposition.

TED by—Alice, eighteen, brown hair and eyes, dark.

ALICE by—Richard, eighteen, tall.

LILLIE by—Samuel, twenty-two, fair, medium height, fond of dancing.

JOSEPH by—Constance, nineteen, fair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing, tall.

NELLIE by—George, twenty-one, fair, of a loving disposition, blue eyes.

T. B. by—W. J., twenty, medium height, dark hair, blue eyes, loving.

ALBERT by—G. B., hazel eyes, tall, fair, and fond of music.

NED by—E. W., medium height, dark, fond of home and music.

LIESIE by—Willie, twenty, medium height, dark hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

EDWARD by—Polly, twenty, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

JOE by—B., twenty, medium height, dark.

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